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With my thesis, I have attempted to find a multimedia-oriented approach to musical composition that simultaneously presents a number of possible interpretations and allows for listeners to create their own. *Tarrare: Consumption Studies* explores a discursive space created around Tarrare, an eighteenth-century polyphagist, through instrumental music, electronic sound, spoken text, and moving image. I collaborated on many of the texts with Jensen Suther.

This thesis also examines media theories that aim to address the relationships between different facets of multimedia creation and experience, particularly intermedia (a concept from Fluxus artist Dick Higgins that examines collisions between different art forms), hypermedia (a phenomenon particularly common on the Internet where different elements are explicitly linked together to form non-linear experiences), and metamedia (a process that relies on technology to take old media and rework the material into new media).

I provide the text of the narration (Appendix A) and a score of the instrumental work (Appendix B).

INTERMEDIA, HYPERMEDIA, AND METAMEDIA IN *TARRARE: CONSUMPTION STUDIES*

by

Jonathan Frederick Wall

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With my thesis, I have attempted to find a multimedia-oriented approach to musical composition that simultaneously presents a number of interpretations and allows for listeners to create their own. *Tarrare: Consumption Studies* explores a discursive space cued by an eighteenth-century French medical oddity through instrumental music, electronic sound, spoken text, and moving image; I worked on many of the texts with Jensen Suther, a friend and frequent musical collaborator.

Although much of my training is as an instrumental composer and electronic musician, my conception of the piece was of a work that presented overlapping media without forcing a hierarchical audience experience; spectators should be free to hear, watch, or read whatever they find the most salient.

Chapter II gives basic biographical information on Tarrare himself, the French polyphagist that provides the framework for the composition; Chapter III provides more thorough details about the piece itself; and Chapter IV discusses multimedia theories that may give some insight into both the creative and experiential processes.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON TARRARE

Tarrare was born near Lyon, France in the early 1770s.[1] He quickly developed an insatiable appetite; despite weighing only one hundred pounds as a teenager, he was able to consume one-quarter of that weight in raw beef within a twenty-four-hour period.[2] Unable to find relief for this constant hunger, he left his parents as a teenager; traveling with a group of thieves and prostitutes, he began to give street performances where he would swallow stones, corks, live animals, or entire apples one by one.[3] He later became known for performances where he would swallow snakes or eels, crushing the head and then swallowing the animal whole.[4]

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[1] "Tarrare" is the man's only remaining title. It may be a given name, a surname, or perhaps a nickname chosen to mock his excessive flatulence (from the French expression "bom-bom tarare," used to describe explosions). See Jan Bondeson, *The Two-Headed Boy, and Other Medical Marvels* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 275.

[2] "Polyphagism," in *The London Medical and Physical Journal; Containing Original Correspondence of Eminent Practitioners, and the Earliest Information on Subjects Connected With Medicine, Surgery, Chemistry, Pharmacy, Botany, and Natural History*, edited by T. Bradley, Samuel Fothergill & William Hutchinson, vol. 42 (July–Dec. 1819), 203. Much of this material is adapted from the French account given by George Didier, Baron Percy, in "Mémoire sur la polyphagie", *Journal de médecine, chirurgie, pharmacie* , no. 9 (Oct./Nov. 1804), 90–99.

[3] Bondeson, 276.

[4] "Polyphagism," 204.

After moving to Paris in 1788, Tarrare was caught by the spirit of French Revolution and joined the army. Even on quadruple rations, however, he was unable to be sated, and was forced to scavenge garbage for scraps and hunt stray cats and dogs.[5] Falling prey to starvation-induced exhaustion, he was taken to the hospital and introduced to Dr. Courville and (more importantly) George Didier, Baron Percy, a military surgeon who encountered Tarrare several times throughout his life and discussed the case in his memoirs.[6] From these writings, we are given the most accurate physical descriptions of Tarrare's person:

> His cheeks were sallow, and furrowed by long and deep wrinkles: on distending them, he could hold in them as many as a dozen eggs or apples. His mouth was very large; he had hardly any lips; he had all his teeth, the molares were much worn away, and the colour of their enamel streaked like marble; the space between the jaws, when they were fully separated, measured about four inches: in this state, with the head inclined backwards, the mouth and œsophagus formed a rectilinear canal, into which a cylinder of a foot in circumference could be introduced without touching the palate. … He often stank to such a degree, that he could not be endured within the distance of twenty paces. He was subject to a flux from the bowels, and his dejections were fetid beyond all conception. When he had not eaten copiously within a short time, the skin of his belly would wrap almost around his body. When he was well satiated with food, the vapour from his body increased, his cheeks and his eyes became of a vivid red; a brutal somnolence, and a sort of hebetude, came over him while he digested. He was in this state troubled with noisy belchings, and made, in moving his jaw, some motions like those of deglutition.[7]

[5] Bondeson, 276–7.

[6] Ibid., 281.

[7] "Polyphagism," 205.

After subjecting Tarrare to a number of studies and tests of skill, the French military considered using his "talents" in military operations (Jan Bondeson writes that Napoleon himself may have been present as these plans were formed).[8] Tarrare swallowed a small wooden box with a message inside and crossed into enemy territory to deliver the missive undetected (albeit somewhat messily, given the biological nature of its concealment). Unfortunately, Tarrare spoke only French and was unable to evade being discovered; after being captured by the Prussian army, however, it was discovered that the message he had swallowed was only a trial run and contained no useful information. After threatening to execute the failed spy, the bemused (and disgusted) enemy forces sent him back across the border.[9]

Tarrare encountered Professor Percy at least twice more; on the first of these occasions, he was again being studied in a hospital—eating used bandages in an attempt to stay fed—before becoming the prime suspect in the disappearance of a fourteen-month-old toddler and being forced to flee the region.[10] They met again at Tarrare's request, four years later, as he was nearing death; he had swallowed a golden fork two years earlier and was convinced that the unpassed utensil was killing him. About a month later, Tarrare succumbed to exudative diarrhea; no fork was ever found.[11] Of the patient's corpse, Percy wrote:

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[8] Bondeson, 277.

[9] Ibid., 278.

[10] Ibid., 279.

[11] Ibid.

His body, as soon as he was dead, became a prey to an horrible corruption. The entrails were putrefied, confounded together, and immersed in pus: the liver was excessively large, void of consistence, and in a putrescent state; the gall-bladder was of considerable magnitude; the stomach, in a lax state, and, having ulcerated patches dispersed about it, covered almost the whole of the abdominal region.[12]

[12] "Polyphagism," 204.

CHAPTER III

TARRARE: CONSUMPTION STUDIES

As compelling as this narrative may be in its depiction of Tarrare's tragic monstrosity, I was not interested in creating a traditionally plot-based work.[13] Instead, I imagined an alternate universe where Tarrare's story served almost as a creation myth; just as themes of love, betrayal, and death can be found throughout mythology, literature, and film, I considered a world that relied on themes of consumption, absorption, accumulation, and biological digestive processes. In this context, I am not required to tell the polyphagist's story—*we have all already learned it.*

The newfound significance of Tarrare in this invented universe—a near-omnipresence—also creates new interpretations of real-world events. The coincidental naming of *Tarare* (an opera composed in 1787 by Antonio Salieri) and Tarrare (a British racehorse from the 1820s) gain new relevance; an electronic pop band I performed in with my *Tarrare* collaborator Jensen Suther, Bole, must also be reconsidered as an echo of the digestive term *bolus*.

Much of the composition draws its materials from this conceptual punning: the initial and final movements are deconstructions of the first and last page of Salieri's opera, and the second movement's text alternates between adaptations of contemporary

[13] Britain's Wattle & Daub Figure Theatre coincidentally began work on a "Chamber Opera for Puppets" titled *The Depraved Appetite of Tarrare the Freak* around the time that I first encountered the material.

material written about Tarrare the racehorse and Tarrare the polyphagist. Other material is more directly referential towards the digestive processes that defined Tarrare's existence—stomach gurgles are used as electronic percussion samples, the beeping of an X-ray machine during an esophageal study provides the foundation for the second movement, and the harmonic and rhythmic processes of the third movement mimic the reductionism inherent in the chewing and swallowing of food.

Even when focusing directly on Tarrare-the-man, Suther's texts are framed from different angles. The first and last texts are meditative poems, while the long discursive text that dominates the fourth movement uses Tarrare's affliction as a catalyst for a discussion of the role of myth and interpretation in contemporaneous German bourgeois society. The third movement contains the most literally biographical material in the entire composition; despite being framed as a series of semi-cryptic aphorisms, each scene is taken directly from Tarrare's life.

In composing *Tarrare: Consumption Studies*, I was determined to create an all-encompassing work *about* this invented "meta-Tarrare." I combined relevant field recordings (digestive sounds), compositional processes that simulate biology (the chewing and swallowing of food), and biographic material (Suther's texts) with a variety of sources that are connected only by coincidence. In this way, I was very much inspired by Gavin Bryars' indeterminate composition *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1969), which similarly incorporates Morse code rhythms, field recordings of icebergs, hymns played on the voyage, interviews with survivors, and large-scale structures influenced by the

boat's design.[14] Bryars' massive amount of preliminary research is as much a part of the piece as any of the musical material; in a conversation with Michael Nyman, he mentioned that "the phenomena that a piece exhibits are of less interest than, as with most pieces, that which is logically prior to the piece" and that his "research, detection, deduction, speculation, assemblage of materials" create a type of "mutable music."[15] Likewise, the contexts that *Tarrare: Consumption Studies* explores, creates, and suggests are as significant as the music and visuals that the work presents directly to the audience.

Bryars wrote that his research-driven pieces were "interesting not only because of their aural effect (which may or may not be considerable) but also because of what they… imply and… contain."[16] However, he stressed that the connections he made were "logical and hence necessary rather than literary, political, social, situational, and hence tangential."[17] In contrast, *Tarrare: Consumption Studies*, is deliberately tangential; with the exception of the biographical material and perhaps the biological elements that Tarrare's affliction suggests, virtually every implication—horses, opera, poetics—is meant to be considered *alongside* the man the piece is ostensibly discussing rather than as a consequence. Unlike Bryars' research on the Titanic, which starts with the ship and then examines individual aspects of its voyage, *Tarrare: Consumption Studies* is

[14] Gavin Bryars, *The Sinking of the Titanic*, in *Soundings* 9 (Berkeley, CA: 1975).

[15] Michael Nyman, "Gavin Bryars 1971 Michael Nyman 1975," *Soundings* 9.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

constructed non-hierarchically; the unseen meta-Tarrare theoretically contains all of these elements, but is never presented as a single figure for the audience to comprehend.

In this way, the viewer's interpretation is subject to which text, images, and music are experienced at any given time. Depending on where her focus has fallen, an audience member may consider the piece to be "about" a particularly hungry racehorse, a fictional character in German literature, or simply a series of abstract texts set to music—and none of these is incorrect or superior to any other. Therefore, both the breadth of the conceptual content and the array of multimedia elements (discussed in Chapter IV) is meant to create a space that does not demand one understanding but allows for any experience to be valid and effective.

CHAPTER IV

INTERMEDIA, HYPERMEDIA, AND METAMEDIA

As the twentieth century delivered new technologies and modes of combining the traditionally distinct arts of music, motion, text, and visuals, new terminology became necessary to explain the concepts being explored. Gathered under the umbrella term of *multimedia*, I have considered three distinct articulations of this phenomenon: Dick Higgins' *intermedia*, developed in the 1960s in response to Dada and Fluxus artists who crossed artistic boundaries; *hypermedia*, a process developed to link different pieces of media together (realized most successfully on the Internet); and *metamedia*, a theory developed by Lev Manovich to describe the mapping of new media onto old media.

In 1966, Dick Higgins wrote an essay on what he termed "intermedia," a movement he perceived among his colleagues that ignored (or deliberately destroyed) the boundaries established by previous artists, audiences, and critics.[18] These pieces could combine music and philosophy (as in works by John Cage and Philip Corner), music and sculpture (Joe Jones' percussion-playing automata), or conceivably even painting and shoes (although Higgins is unable to provide any examples).[19] He viewed the development as a way to escape from the "confines" of Pop and Op Art, which he claims

[18] Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *Something Else Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (Something Else Press, 1966), 4.

[19] Ibid.

perpetuate a compartmentalization that no longer applies to "the dawn of classless society"—an era he may have anticipated too optimistically.[20] Even as the concept of intermedia approaches the half-century mark, however, it remains useful for contemporary theorists; in discussing the role of new media in culture, Ken Friedman writes that intermedia remains useful "because it emphasizes conceptual clarity and categorical ambiguity"—although its constituent parts are often part of the classical "old media" structures of painting, theatre, sculpture, and so on.[21]

Ted Nelson created the term "hypermedia" (alongside "hypertext," the first half of the URL prefix "http://") in the early 1960s to describe structures that could move non-linearly, making "multidimensional" links between objects that could branch off as necessary (as opposed to the alphabetical ordering within a dictionary or office filing cabinet).[22] Importantly, hypermedia is not concerned with the objects it contains; rather, it measures the degrees of connectedness *between* those objects. For decades, realizations of hypermedia were contained to speculative fiction or limited software experiments like Apple's *HyperCard* (1987). However, the rise of the Internet in the 1990s and the next decade's move toward audiovisual elements has cemented hypermedia's role in the technological experience.

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[20] Ibid., 1–2.

[21] Ken Friedman, "Intermedia: Four Histories, Three Directions, Two Futures," in *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal*, edited by Hans Breder (Dortmund, Germany: University of Dortmund Press, 2005), 57.

[22] Yvonne Spielmann, "History and Theory of Intermedia in Visual Culture," in *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal*, 134.

More recently, critical theorist Lev Manovich has defined "metamedia" as a software-oriented way of "mapping" old media onto new media.[23] Manovich gives some examples of these remaps: time to space, 2D to 3D, sound to image, and so on. More specifically, he mentions software that "transforms" digital video into a "matrix of still images, each image representing a single shot" (of course, film and video already consist of a series of still images; one imagines that this software does more than split frames).[24] For Manovich, the other defining feature of metamedia is its use of "both language and metalanguage"—its original "old media" content and some new framework for changing that content.[25]

My composition, *Tarrare: Consumption Studies*, draws from all three of these and yet cannot be considered as wholly belonging to any one approach. While its combination of visuals, text, music, and sound corresponds to Higgins' boundary-crossing intermedia theory—particularly considering my role in creating each component—each element is often cloistered away from the others. Significantly, the music is generally not synchronized with the other elements; as Higgins wrote about (non-intermedia) opera, the problem is that "we know what is the music, what is the text,

[23] Lev Manovich, "Understanding Meta-media," in *Critical Digital Studies: A Reader*, edited by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 106.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 107.

and what is the mise-en-scéne."[26] Further, while I initially considered a more technological performance that allowed audience members to use Web-connected devices to explore my research materials while experiencing the piece, I settled on a composition that is not explicitly interactive—although listeners' attention and conclusions are free to shift during the performance, they are essentially given the composition once, all the way through, from the beginning to the end. A truly "hyper" experience would perhaps allow for more distinctly individual branches. And again, Manovich's software-driven metamedia theory has little in common with the materials used in *Tarrare*. Although I remix a variety of "old media" sources, mappings are generally made between like forms—the opera is made into new musical material, videos are presented as videos, and so on (one exception is perhaps the incorporation of Morse code rhythms in the percussion part, a technique used by Bryars in *The Sinking of the Titanic*).

Distinguishing between performative elements and the compositional process allows for further inter/hyper/metamedia interpretations. I knew from the earliest creative stages that the work was to consist of multiple media—text, music, electronics, and video—and that the components would not necessarily correspond to each other all the way through (the video-text relationship is perhaps the clearest instance of intermedia, as the general role of the video is to present the spoken text in a visually interesting way). Much of my research was done through the exhaustive hypermedia opportunities provided by Wikipedia pages and YouTube sidebars, both of which provide a fairly low signal-to-noise ratio (Wikipedia's "disambiguation" links, for example, led

[26] Dick Higgins, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of Intermedia* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 16.

me to read about the opera, racehorse, and French town that were homonymic with Tarrare; YouTube suggested a number of videos about swallowing fetishes as I was searching for footage of medical studies). More abstractly, the piece at large is a metamedia "mapping" of large-scale compositional concepts—the "meta-Tarrare" outlined in Chapter III—to smaller-scale performative elements.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This document has sought to explain the material and goals of *Tarrare: Consumption Studies*, as well as introducing a number of multimedia theories that help to inform its creation. As I move from an academic degree program into the openness of an unbounded art world, I hope to continue to focus on multimedia work with a particular emphasis on the various relationships discussed in Chapter III (with or without music as a primary element). Although the disconnectedness of *Tarrare: Consumption Studies* was an intentional component of the composition, I hope to improve the cohesion within further pieces—both horizontally (between movements) and vertically (between multimedia elements).

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APPENDIX A

NARRATION TEXT OF *TARRARE: CONSUMPTION STUDIES*

texts for movements I, 3, 4, and 6 written by Jensen Suther
text for movement 2 written by Jonathan Wall

1. Prologue: A Signified Turned Inside Out

By starting with the words themselves,
which sign the gaps in air,
which loose or lose the sense
their wooded interior snares, we hear
the canopy, the susurrus of trees,
the airy trace of dense essence
entrapped by diaphragm of tympan. Or perhaps
an early knell, the sign whose voice is death:
A signified turned inside out, its spine
a swelling ridge, displays its bones and creaks,
reveals, as rachis, its only function,
as armature, as framework, of the drift.

„Produktion der Leiche ist, vom Tode her betrachtet, das Leben"
— from Walter Benjamin, Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels.

2. Esophagography: The Doncaster St Leger 1826 / An Horrible Corruption

Tarrare
was winner of the
Doncaster Saint Leger 1826,
beating Mulatto and Bedlamite in a field of 27 horses,
thereby proving himself
the best horse of his year.

His mouth is very large;
he has hardly any lips;
he has all his teeth;
the space between his fully separated jaws measures about four inches;
the mouth and esophagus form a rectilinear canal,
into which a cylinder of a foot in circumference could be introduced.

Tarrare
is 16 hands 1 inch high,
bay, with black legs, free from white;
he is lengthy,
with great muscular racing powers,
and sound constitution.

When he is well satiated with food,
the vapor from his body increases,
his cheeks and his eyes become of a vivid red;
a brutal somnolence,
and a sort of hebetude,
come over him while he digests.

Experienced judges
allow
Tarrare
to be an invaluable
cross
with South country mares.

His body,
as soon as he dies,
becomes a prey to an horrible corruption;
the entrails are putrefied,
confounded together,
and immersed in pus.

3. Gnathology (Mastications I-IV; Deglutition)

I. One can imagine, then, issuing from the dark corner of a dimly lit tavern, the grotesque sounds of a terrifying voracity: a sallow face, its unctuous shine piercing even the shadows in which Tarrare, hiding, gorges on moldy entrails, butcher's scraps, and a large rat that, having scented the rotten food, dared to approach.

II. Like that of a pregnant woman, his distended stomach – full of fur and skin, small creatures, some even still alive – resembles the symbol: his threadbare appearance, his dull, but vaguely melancholic, countenance, as well as the distension itself, bear witness to the pain of a consumption that, never ending, subordinates to itself all spirit, all mind.

III. As a group of French generals stood watching, their interest piqued by the rumors of an insatiable monster, Tarrare swallowed a wooden box containing secret military documents, only to reproduce the small container, which remained intact, again just moments later. While the box protected the secret papers, they attained encryption in Tarrare, the body itself repurposed as an expressionless signifier.

IV. As if his esurience were the eighteenth-century caricature of mythic fate, Tarrare's tragic existence culminated in a painful, enigmatic death: unable to move from his bed in a hospital ward in Versailles, Tarrare demanded a powerful laxative that would dislodge from his bowels a golden fork consumed years earlier. He died a month later, from purulent diarrhea, and the pathologist, whose discoveries included an enlarged liver and distended gallbladder, found no sign of the fork, in the form of which, it would seem, Tarrare had sublimated the whole of his misfortune.

4. "Corpus"

In a certain sense, the story of Tarrare exemplifies a kind of resistance, a particular species of critique, refusing as it does to admit of simple interpretation, fast and easy construals. His was a death that simply expired: it did not live on, it was not absorbed into a greater economy of meaning. A French medical journal, in an article on so-called "extraordinary cases," made recourse to Latinate hyperbole to account for this life so utterly determined by exorbitance, excess: *Quod urbibus esse, / Quodque satis poterat populo*. That a medical scholar need invoke a Roman poet to make the story of Tarrare comprehensible is symptomatic: one discourse and one language forced to seek the resources of another. It is an invocation that functions as resistance to resistance, that proceeds as if the name "Tarrare" signified more than a putrescent curiosity and could be redeemed by poetic language alone.

But the text of his life – since we deal here not with the flesh and blood of existence but with the *writing*, the dead letters, of myth and reception – it plays a role in a larger discourse that overcomes all resistance, that articulates the negation of resistance as such: that of philosophical idealism. Extricated from this discourse, however, the *corpus* of Tarrare – and this will be our thesis – is *allegory*, a trope whose reputed banality and inexpressiveness necessitate a further elaboration of the concept.

In Walter Benjamin's famous study of German Baroque drama, the *Trauerspiel*, he sets out to recover the concept of allegory from centuries of disparagement and misinterpretation. Against earlier critics of the Baroque, Benjamin claims that, far from being a merely accidental relation between concept and image, allegory is a legitimate expressive figure: "allegory […] is not convention of expression, but expression of convention" (175). History, the eternal passing-away of nature, sediments as the allegorical, mythic image, which, when interpreted, comes to express the suffering of the nature that has ossified within it. Or in other words, history comes to a halt, its contents rigidifying, appearing as natural, eternal and necessary, as if conjured by fate, and the

allegorist, who delights in such decay, arranges the lifeless objects into a scene, an etiolated *tableau*. As Benjamin strikingly puts it: "In allegory the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as a petrified, primordial landscape. Everything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face – or rather in a death's head" (166). Interpretation of the allegorical structure, then, reveals its transitoriness, that the most sclerotic, natural-seeming phenomena cannot resist the law of succession, the movement of history. Therefore, allegory is expression by way of non-expression: its meaning is the absence of meaning. Yet this account, general and historical up to this point, has local significance as well: bereft of all "classical proportion, all humanity," the hardened landscape of allegory also raises the crucial question "of the biographical historicity of the individual" (166).

Crucial, that is, because of Tarrare. What Benjamin identifies as the intertwinement of nature and history in the allegorical figure employed in the *Trauerspiel* applies as well to the mythic individual, and in the case of Tarrare, the allegorical image is the body as such, the organs ingathered under the eternal sign of myth. But in Benjamin's account of the *Trauerspiel,* allegory is distinguished from a second figure, *symbol*. Unlike allegory, symbol *embodies* meaning: it is not the rigidified, empty landscape, but enlivened nature, the desiccated soil permeated by the sea. Intended meaning is in symbol manifest; conversely, allegory bears no trace of the idea it expresses. When interpreting Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften,* Benjamin claims that, in works of art, their symbolic unity, their lively appearance, dissimulates their truth; however, interpretation can fracture this expressive layer: "Only the expressionless completes the work, by shattering it into a thing of shards, into a fragment of the true world, *into the torso of a symbol*" (340, emphasis added). The task, then, is first to dislocate the symbolic unity of the myth of Tarrare, to excavate its torso; and second, to decipher the remaining allegorical image, here composed of ruined bone and tissue, and to recover the historical content it furtively embeds.

I. Symbol

In the late eighteenth century, in Paris on the eve of the revolution, a crowd surrounds a young vagabond standing in the middle of a square on the Left Bank. With dusk quickly approaching, and the invention of the gas lamps that will eventually illuminate the dark city still forty years away, the indigent youth, realizing how little time he has, impatiently waits for those just on the square's periphery to draw nearer, to join the steadily growing throng. The crowd finally settled, the performer anxious but grinning, vaguely hungry as he is wont to be—he ascends the two stairs to a makeshift stage, crudely constructed from fruit crates, and motions to a darkly-clad figure who, standing just behind the platform, his face shadowed by a tattered top hat, has slung over his right shoulder a kind of haversack, a small satchel that appears to move, to be animate and alive, and from which emits, one seems to hear, the muted cries of a captive animal, shrill screams whose defeated shrillness only serves to intensify, in the minds of some sympathetic observers, the feelings of terror the condemned creature struggles to convey.

But after this perverse stagehand passes the bag to the performer, and it becomes obvious that, whatever it may be, its content will have a role to play in the act at hand, even those repelled stand transfixed, unable to tear themselves away from the scene unfolding before them.

First, by way of his anomalously broad throat, he devours several whole apples, much to the amusement of the cheering crowd. But mindful of his abdomen's limits, he quickly proceeds to the next part of the performance, swallowing an audience member's cheap pocket watch and then promising, vulgarly, only half in jest, to reproduce it shortly. How delightful, wonderful! Everyone applauds this excellence, this bodily poetics: within a magnificently abyssal stomach, one man's seemingly endless bowels, the drab world of dead, useless objects, of dull things and boring *trouvailles*, comes to life, appears beautiful, significant, restored. A loud noise suddenly pierces the air and silences the crowd, what sounds like a small explosion coming from the stage. But confusion promptly gives way to hysterical laughter, as the performer, slightly embarrassed by his impressive flatulence, is wittily named by his raucous observers, after a French expression for celebratory explosives: *Il est appelé Tarrare!*

The now still and quiet haversack has been forgotten, so that its reintroduction by Tarrare, who is working to untie it, sets the crowd murmuring. A darkening sky and gibbous moon – its barely-observable cratered surface hanging gloomily over the square, not unlike a mournful face watching helplessly as some quiet tragedy occurs – witness the emergence of what the small bag has concealed, a feral cat, which, seeming wounded and disturbed, lacking all feline elegance and thus appearing remarkably incongruous with itself, as if this creature had accidentally awoken as the wrong species, is whisked up by Tarrare, who slowly moves the unfortunate creature toward his dirty mouth…

II. Allegory: Natural History of Tarrare

In the notebooks for Adorno's work toward a theory of musical reproduction, he elaborates a notion of the "x-ray image," which is to be realized through the process of interpretation. The artwork in itself, Adorno claims, extricated from its reception and the various contexts in which it is embedded, is—as pure abstraction—utterly opaque, uninterpretable; rather, true interpretation, the production of the x-ray image or probing of a work's subcutaneous depth, grasps it not as a thing in-itself, essentially unchanging and immutable, but as a complex of ever-shifting relations, an object shaped and developed by its reception and whose objective truth lies in the non-intentional social content it has come to bear. "It is the innermost nature of true interpretation to contribute to the death of its object" (*Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction* 210). In interpretation, the object becomes self-critical, threatening itself with its own collapse, just as the truth of the allegorical object—described in the introduction—consists in its disintegration: the interpreter, then, treats the aesthetic object as allegory. In the case of Tarrare, the x-ray image rendered by interpretation will eliminate the mythic shell

wrapping his narrative and thereby lay bare the contents of the stomach of a polyphage. To commence this autopsy, then, this postmortem work on the body of a mythic figure, I will invoke the scene of his death.

After a brief and disastrous stint as a secret agent in Napoleon's army, having been recruited for his adeptness at storing large objects in his stomach, Tarrare took refuge in a military hospital, where doctors sought, albeit unsuccessfully, to cure him of his extreme insatiability. On multiple occasions, he was caught feeding on cadavers in the hospital morgue; finally, following the unexplainable disappearance of an infant from its crib, as the primary suspect, Tarrare was forced to flee. He vanished and was not seen again until nearly four years later, when, in the final stages of tuberculosis, and in dire need of help, he appeared at a hospital in Versailles. Feverish and unable to move, the delusional man complained constantly of a gold fork that was apparently blocking his intestinal canal, and demanded a purgative potent enough to flush it out. Nearly a month later, after a prolonged episode of near-constant purulent diarrhea, Tarrare's organs began to fail, and he died within a few days. Since no one else was willing to autopsy the rapidly decaying corpse, the hospital's chief surgeon volunteered, mostly out of curiosity. But he could not locate the gold fork, which, in some sense, perhaps a fantastic one, had been Tarrare's final meal.

That the only remnant of Tarrare, the only fragment exempt from the laws of decomposition and decay, was a non-existent fork, is significant: it reveals the limits of myth. What could not be digested, simply absorbed into the narrative of Tarrare, points up the limits of the process of absorption. The unreality of the fork, its existence as delusion, idea, indicates that the unquenchable desire motivating this polyphage, the motor of his being, is inassimilable to the idealist narrative of total identity: it sticks in the craw of the subject of idealism. While Tarrare's material condition was presumably real, since it was documented and described by the medical community, the myth of Tarrare, the dream of the absolute, unconditioned subject, is belied by the one fiction to which his condition gave rise: the illusion of the fork, the fear of the indigestible, what Fichte once called the *Anstoß*, or the irrational not-I. The nineteenth century's myth of the absolute, free individual, proximately made real by the bourgeois subject whose rights were though to be indubitable, remains myth: the narrative of Tarrare, redeemed by critique, demonstrates its limits.

5. Bolus

(no text)

6. Finale: A Spirit Disfigured

Tarrare,
A petrified intelligence,
An atom absolute,

Nurtured by
The golden fork
Of plenitude,

Constitutionally certain of
The way embouchure
Works the earth,

Tarrare dreams nature
With his body, hypertrophic
And ill at ease,

Having in his unfreedom
Grasped freedom
With the canon of the spine;

Having through absorption,
That corporeal technology,
Achieved the identity
Of identity and non-identity.

Tarrare,
Spirit disfigured,
Essay of life,

Arrays in paragraphs
Apples, beautiful birds,
Putridity as such, his chest its *a priori*;

Verneint um zu wirklich zu werden,
To attain interlinear fulfillment,
The synthesis constitutive of cognition.

Tarrare thought:
A beauty of nature is
A beautiful thing;

The beauty of art is
A beautiful representation of a thing,
But impalpable, indigestible.

APPENDIX B

SCORE OF *TARRARE: CONSUMPTION STUDIES*

This is a Transposing Score.

Duration: 22 minutes.

Instrumentation

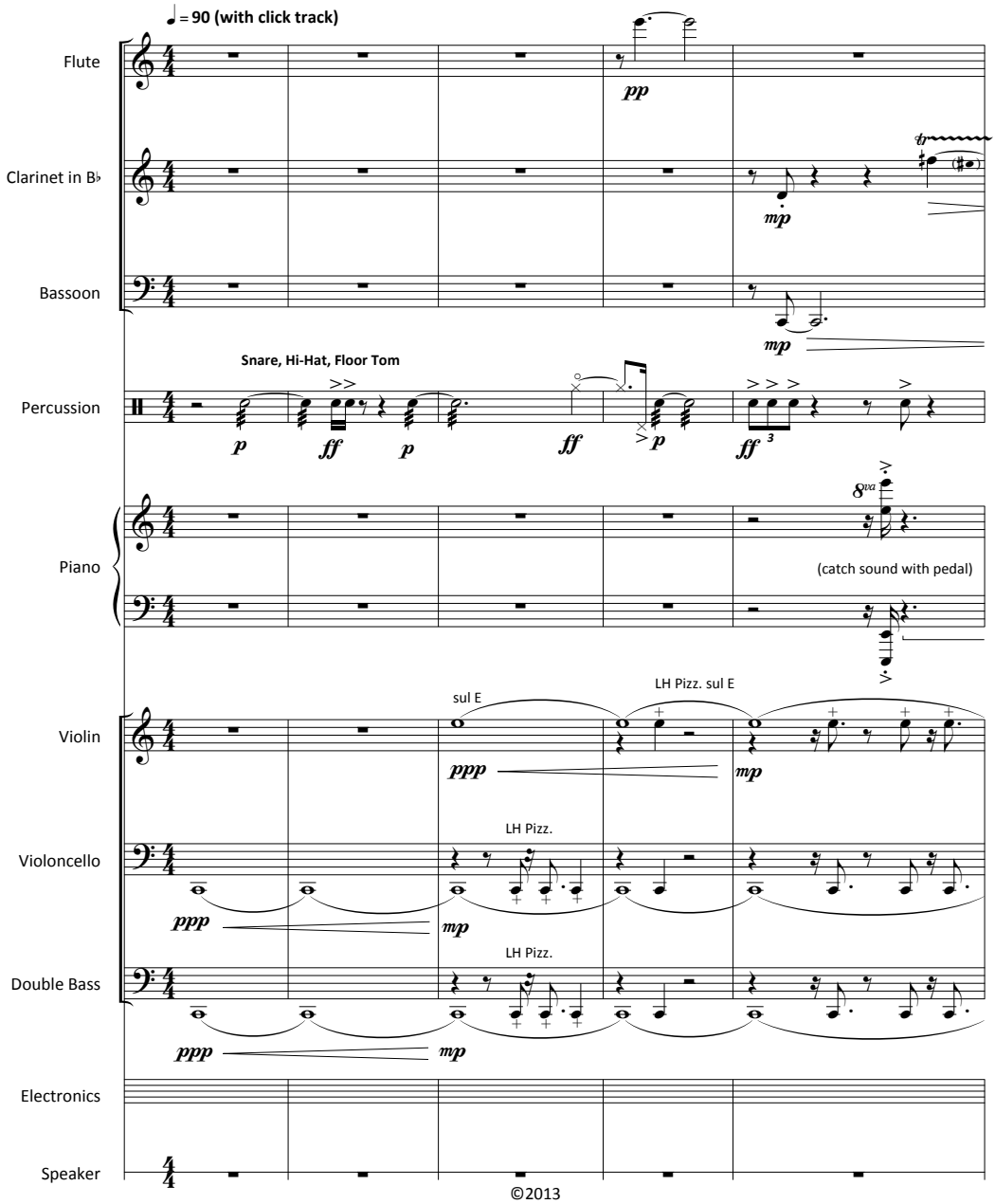
Flute
Clarinet in B-flat
Bassoon
Percussion:
- Floor tom
- Snare drum
- Hi-hat
- Glockenspiel
- Marimba
- Vibraphone
- Pitched/unpitched metals (played with metal beater):
  - Glockenspiel G key
  - Crotale D key
  - Triangle
  - Bell tree (played one bowl at a time)
  - *substitutions may be made; ranges should be similar*
- 3 Flowerpots (high/middle/low)
- Ratchet **(for bassist)**
- Kick drum

Piano
Violin
Violoncello
Double Bass
Narrator
Laptop performer (for click track, playback, and live performance)

1. Prologue:

A Signified Turned Inside Out

Jonathan Wall



©2013

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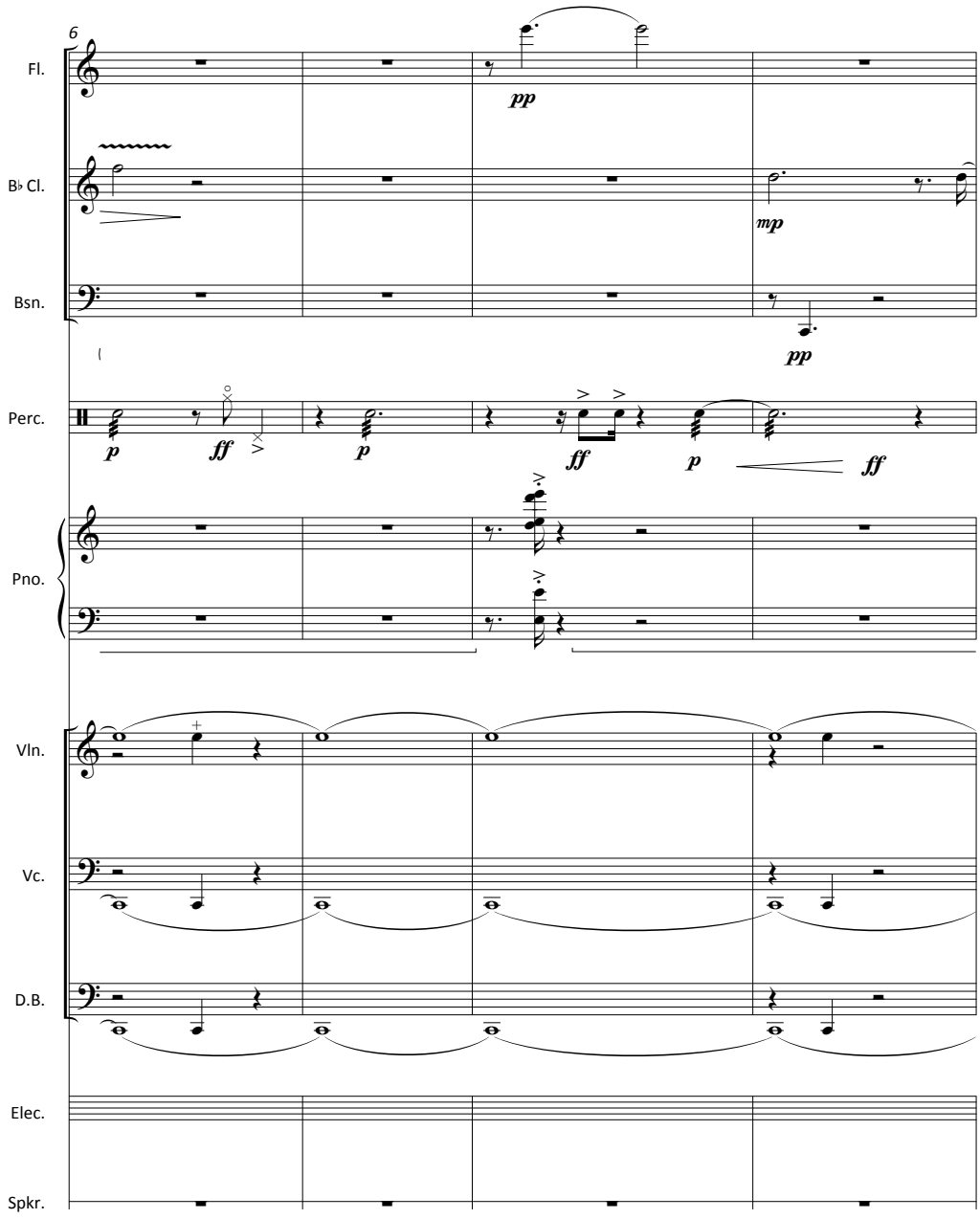
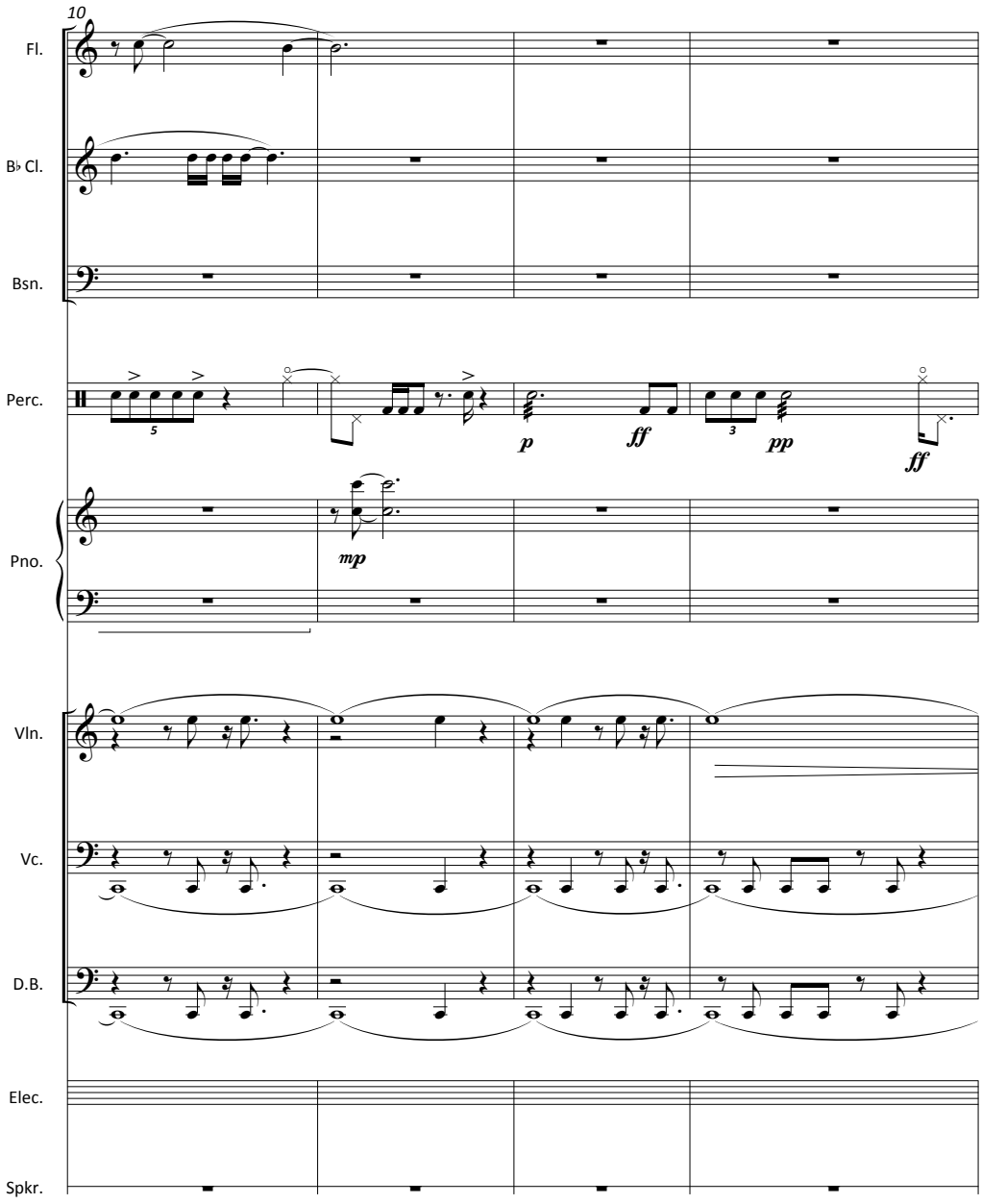
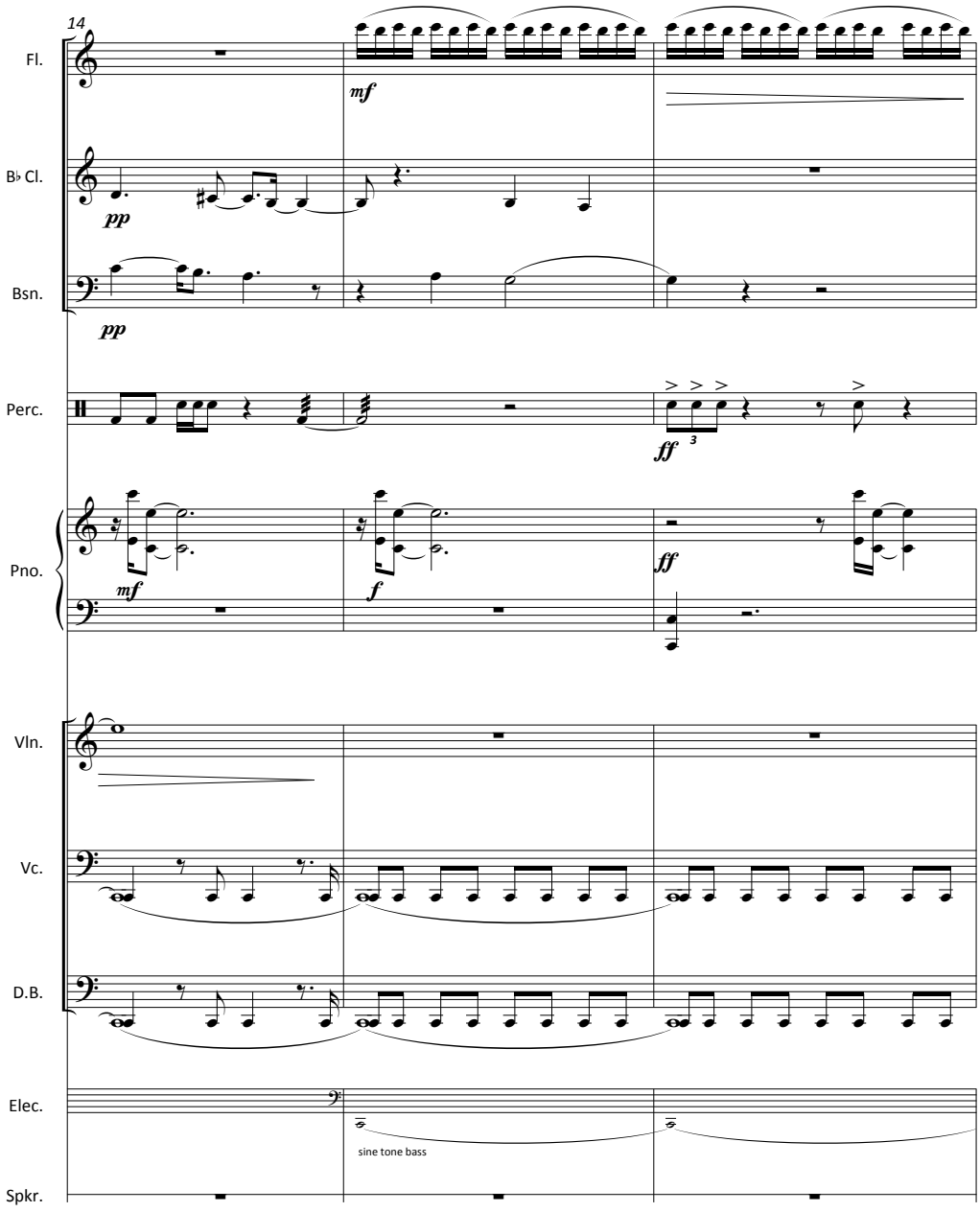
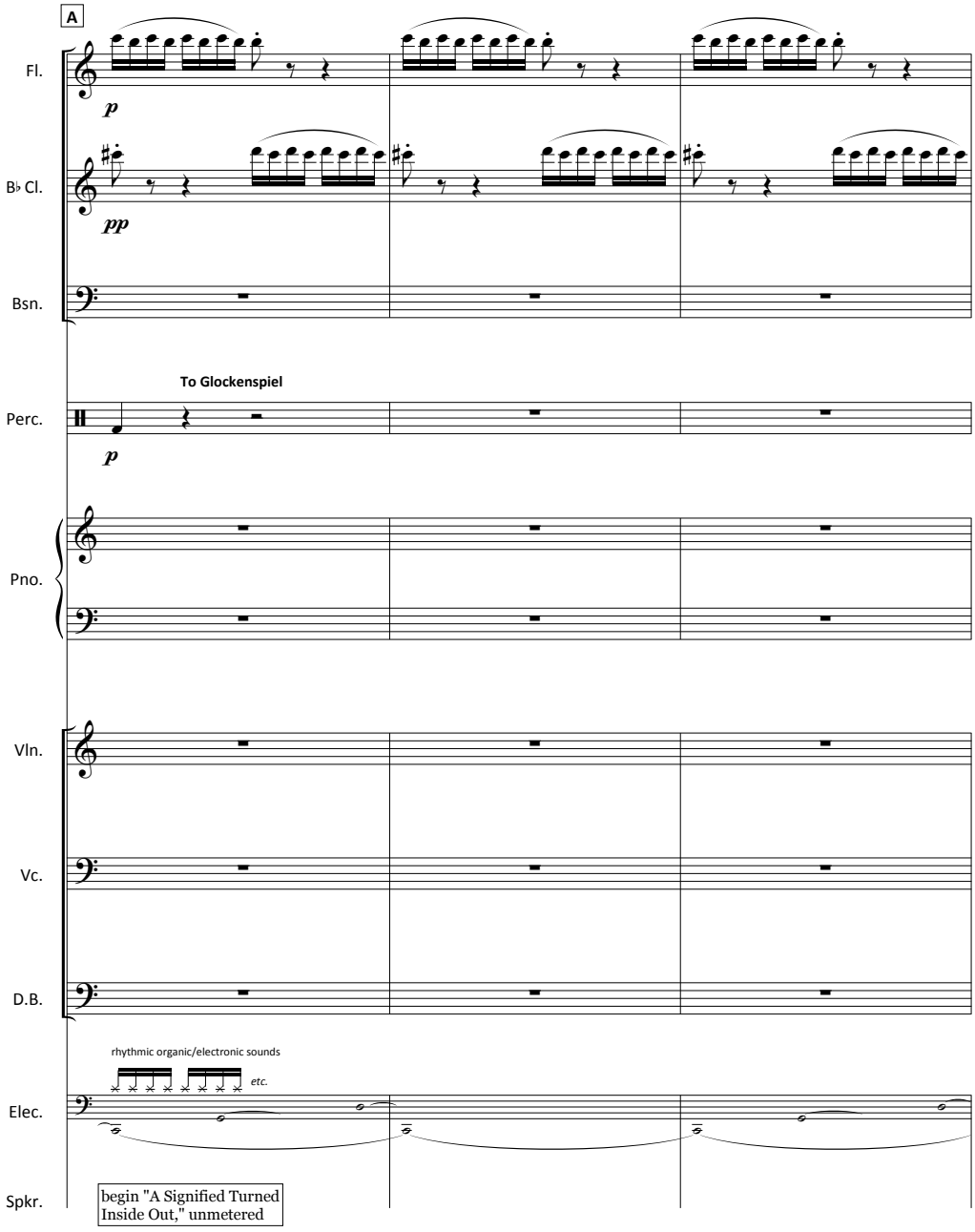


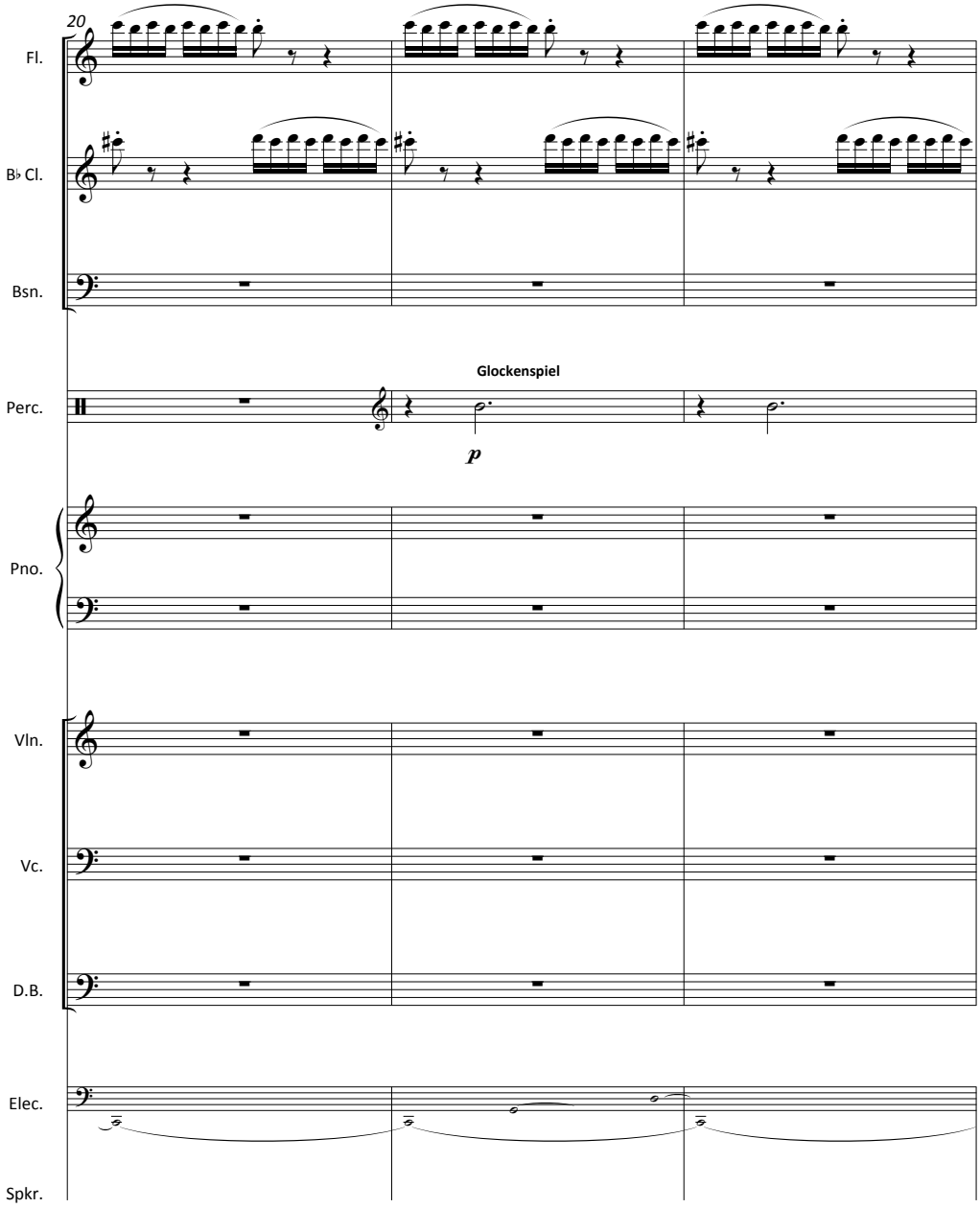

10
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
5
p
ff
3
pp
ff
Pno.
mp
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.

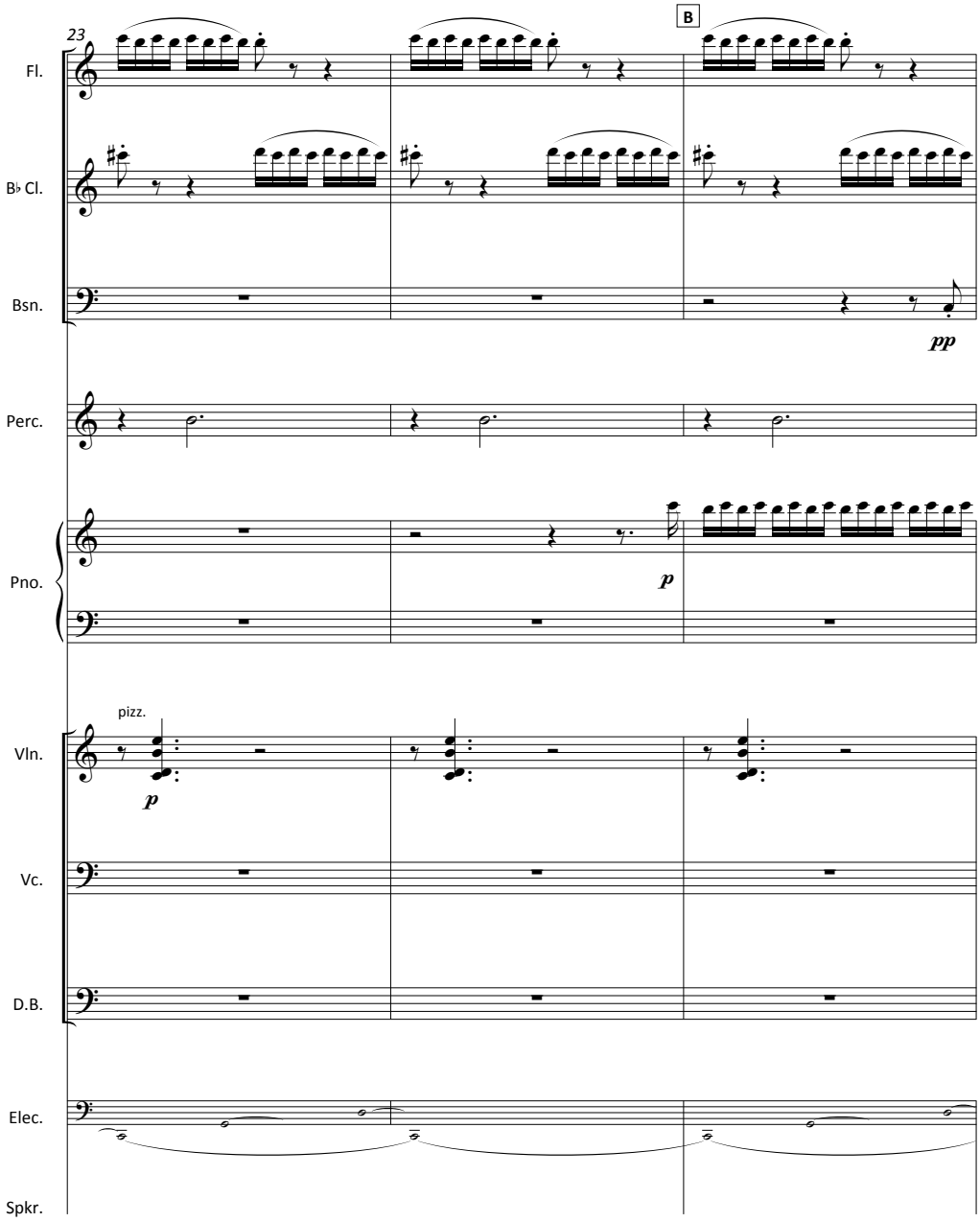

14
Fl.
mf
B♭ Cl.
pp
Bsn.
pp
Perc.
ff
3
Pno.
mf
f
ff
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
sine tone bass
Spkr.

1. Prologue

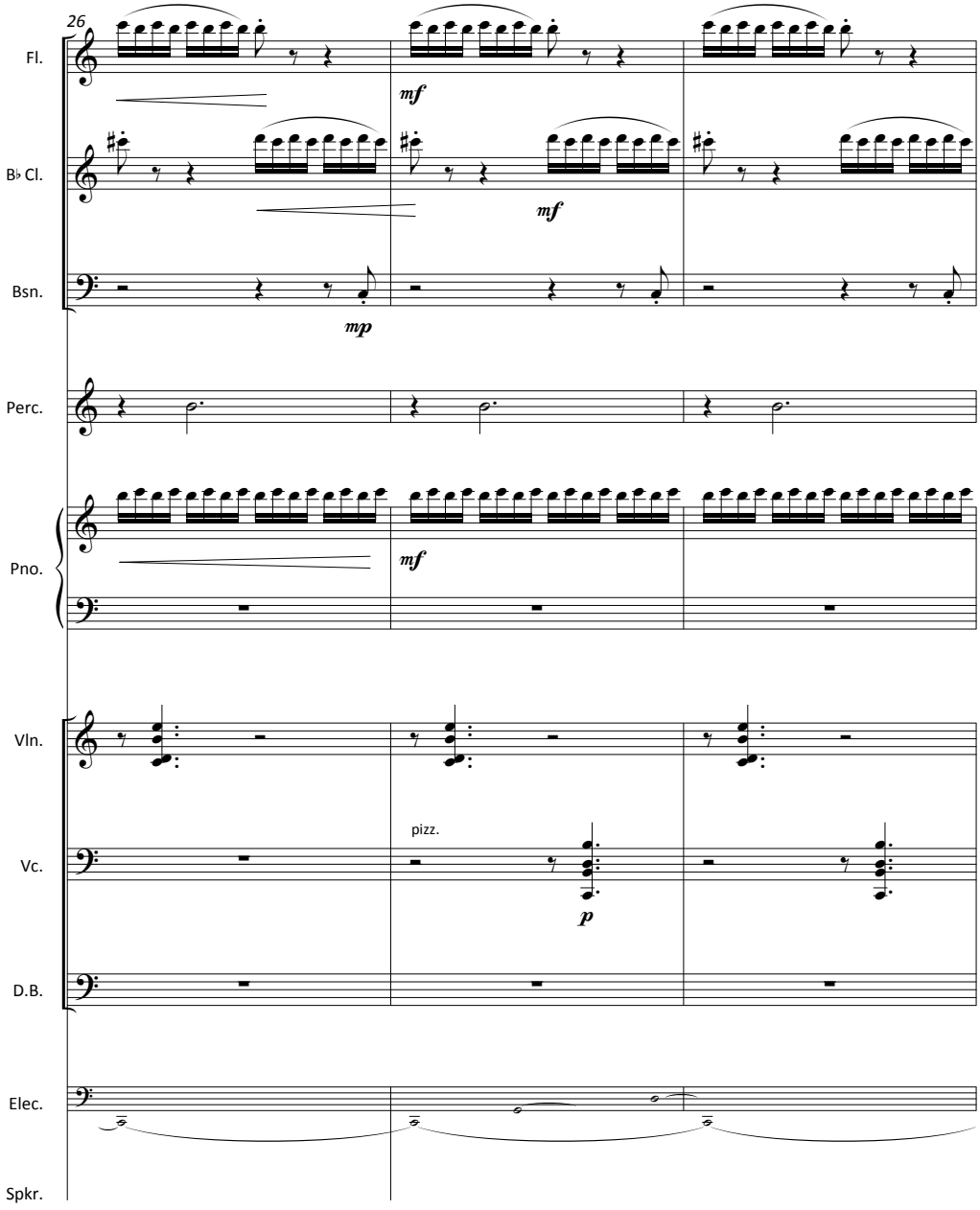

A
Fl.
p
B♭ Cl.
pp
Bsn.
To Glockenspiel
Perc.
p
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
rhythmic organic/electronic sounds
etc.
Elec.
Spkr.
begin "A Signified Turned Inside Out," unmetered

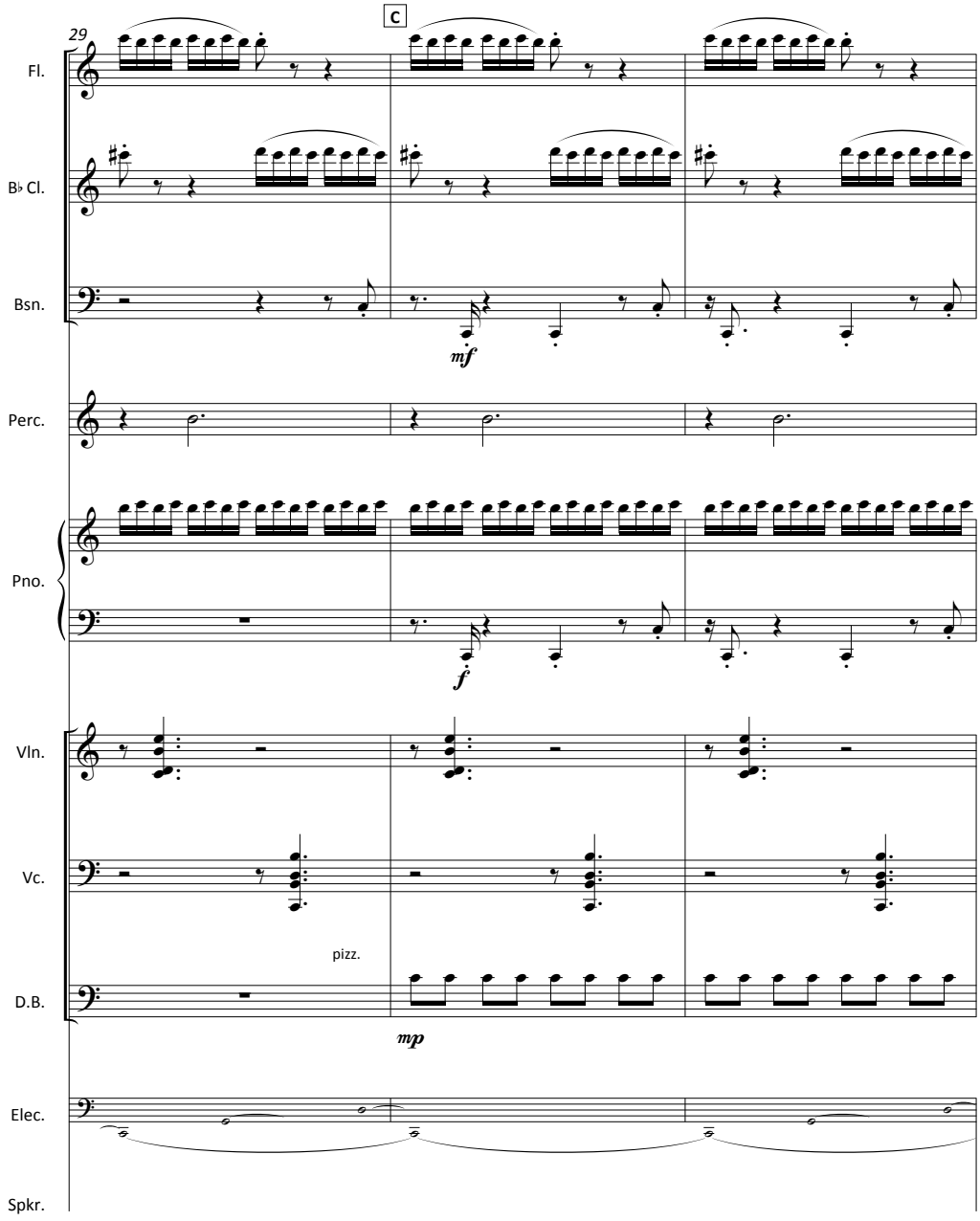
1. Prologue

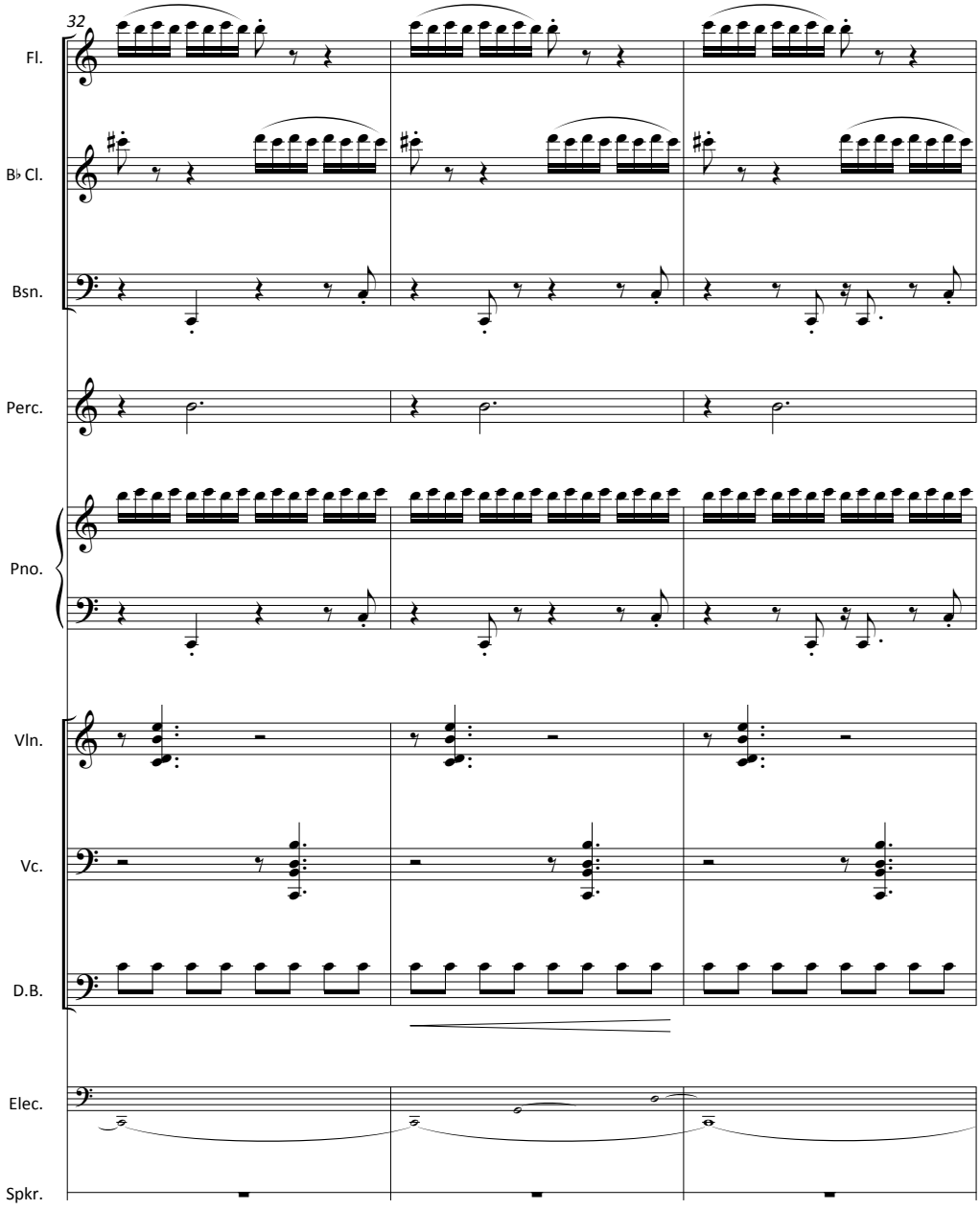


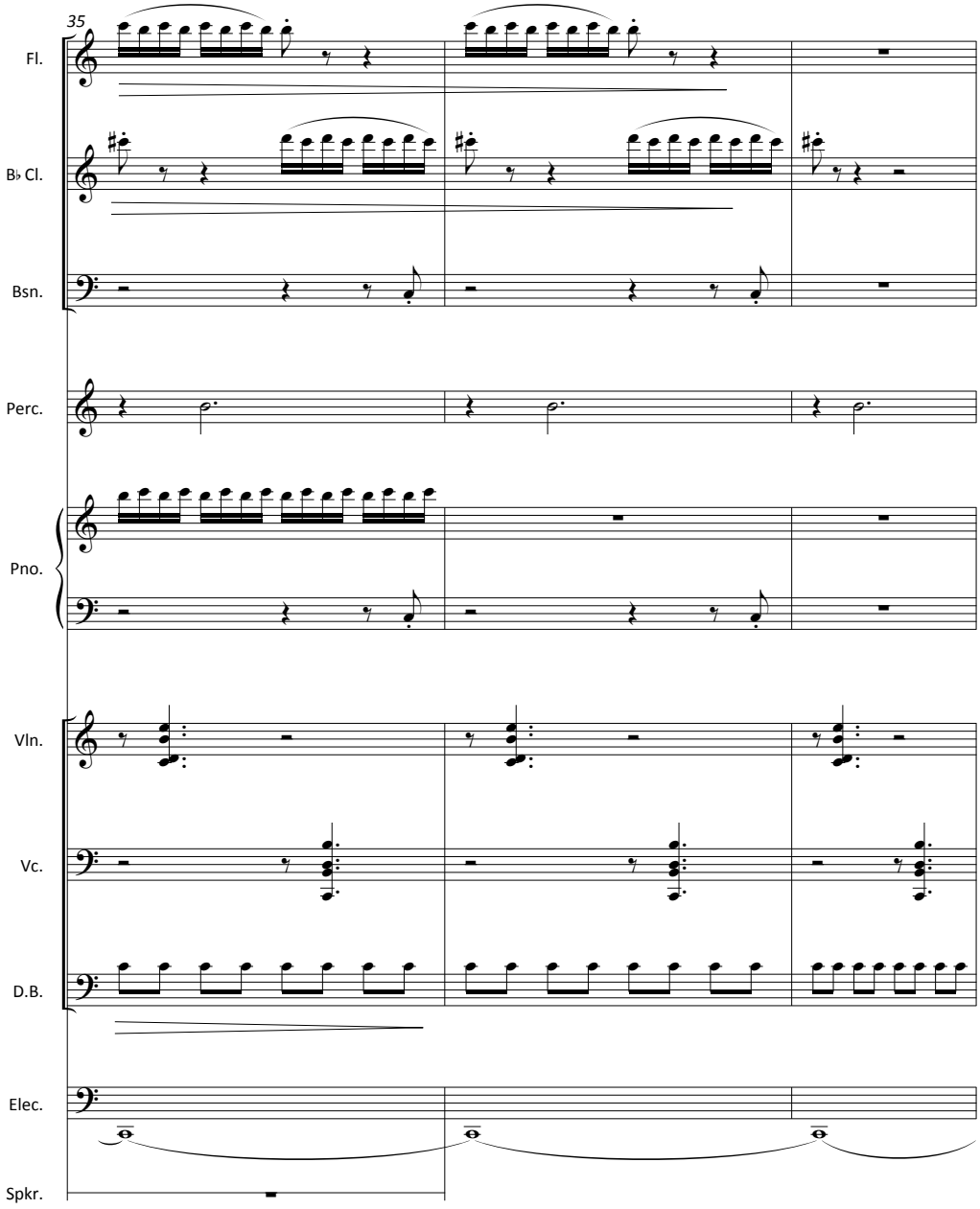

23
B
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
pp
Perc.
Pno.
p
pizz.
Vln.
p
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.

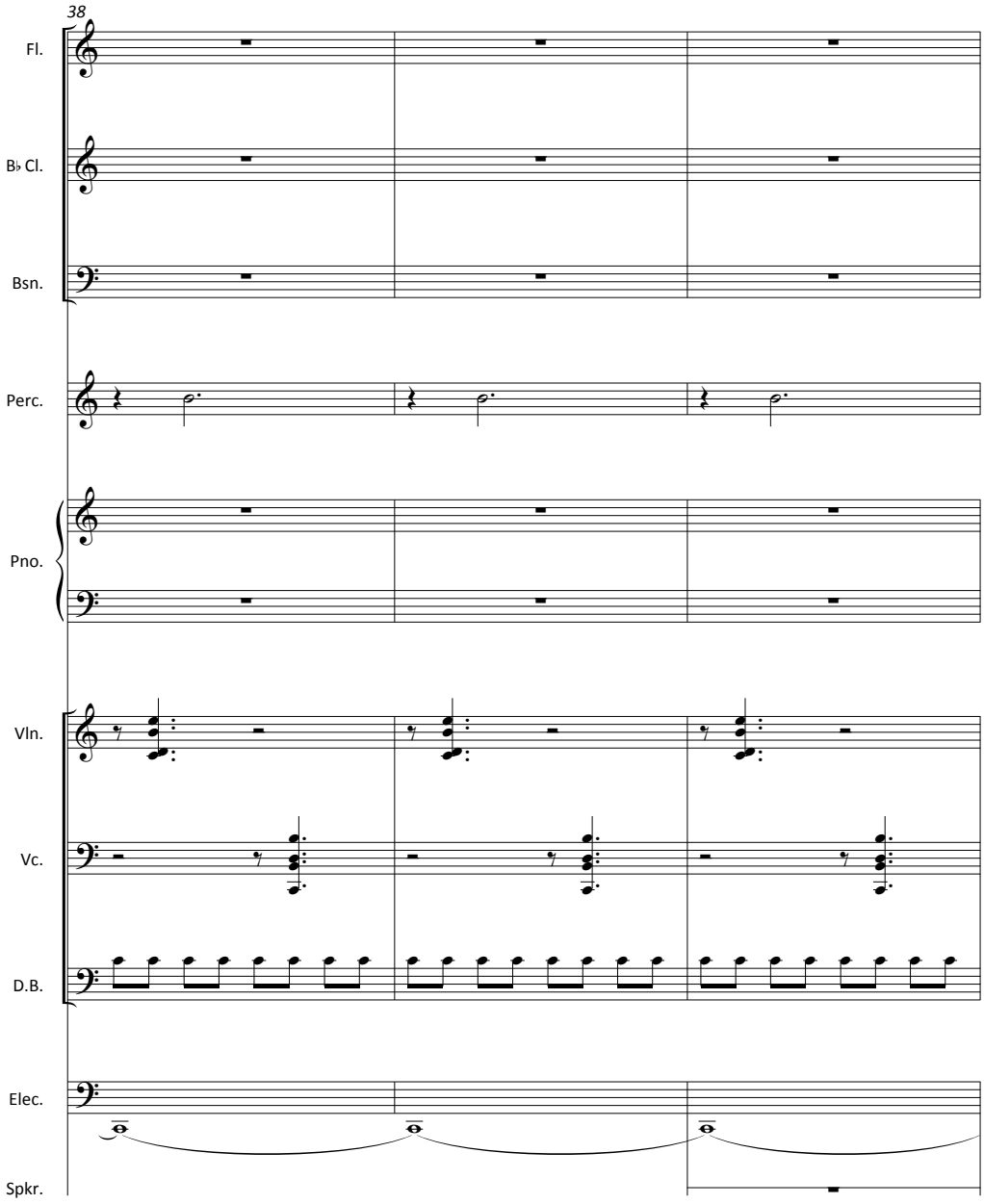
1. Prologue

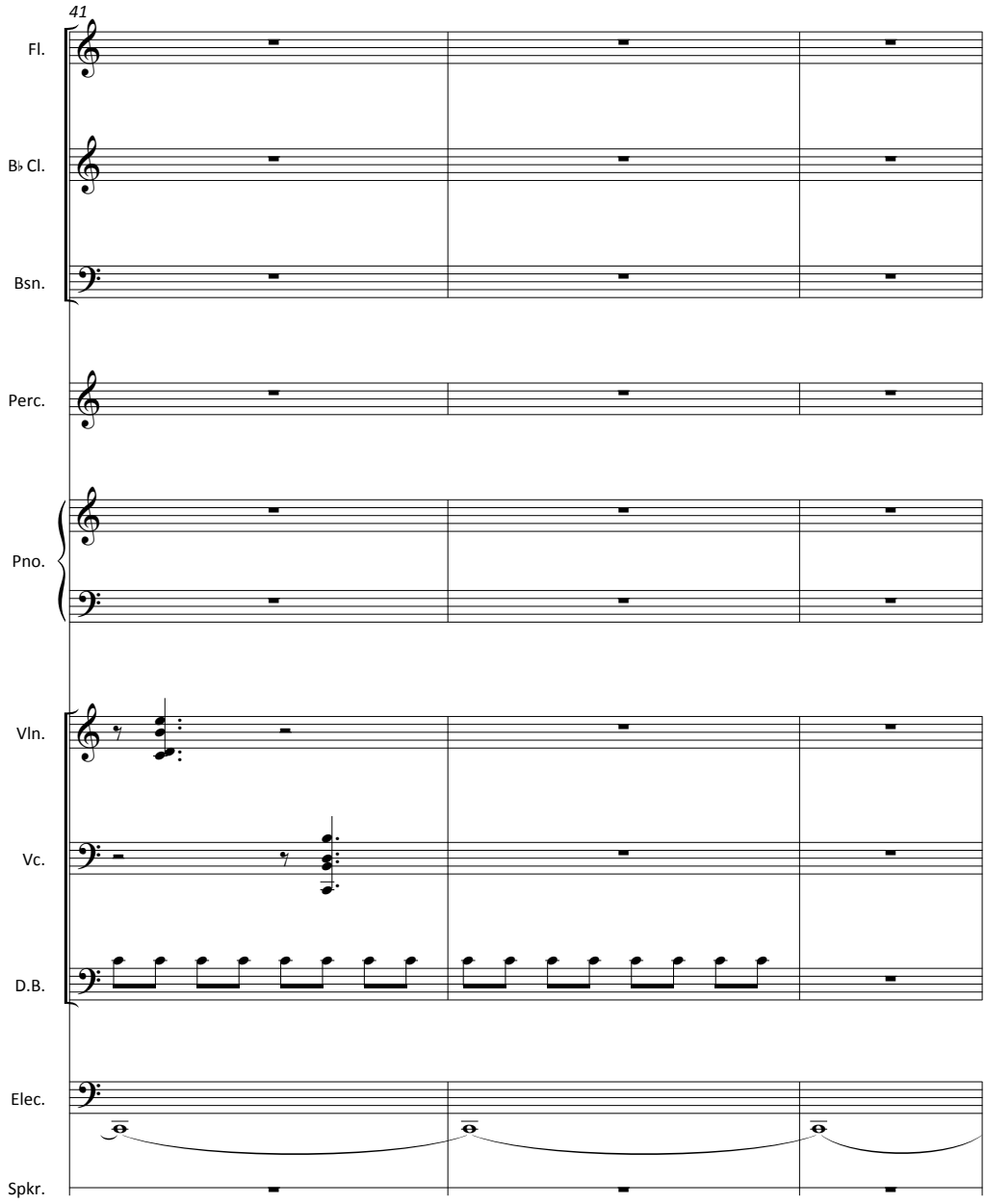



C
29
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mf
Perc.
Pno.
f
Vln.
Vc.
pizz.
D.B.
mp
Elec.
Spkr.

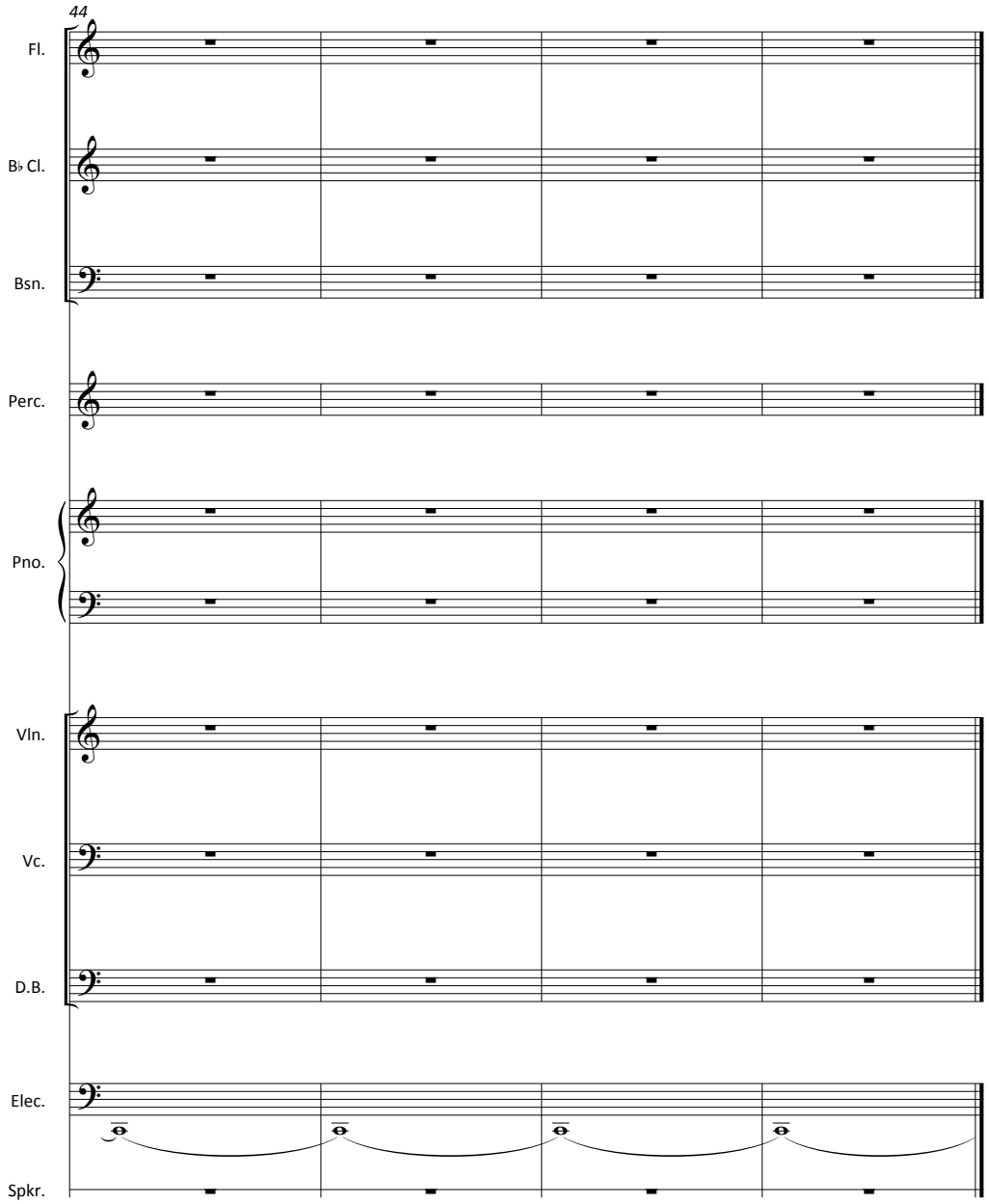

32
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.


35
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.


38
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.

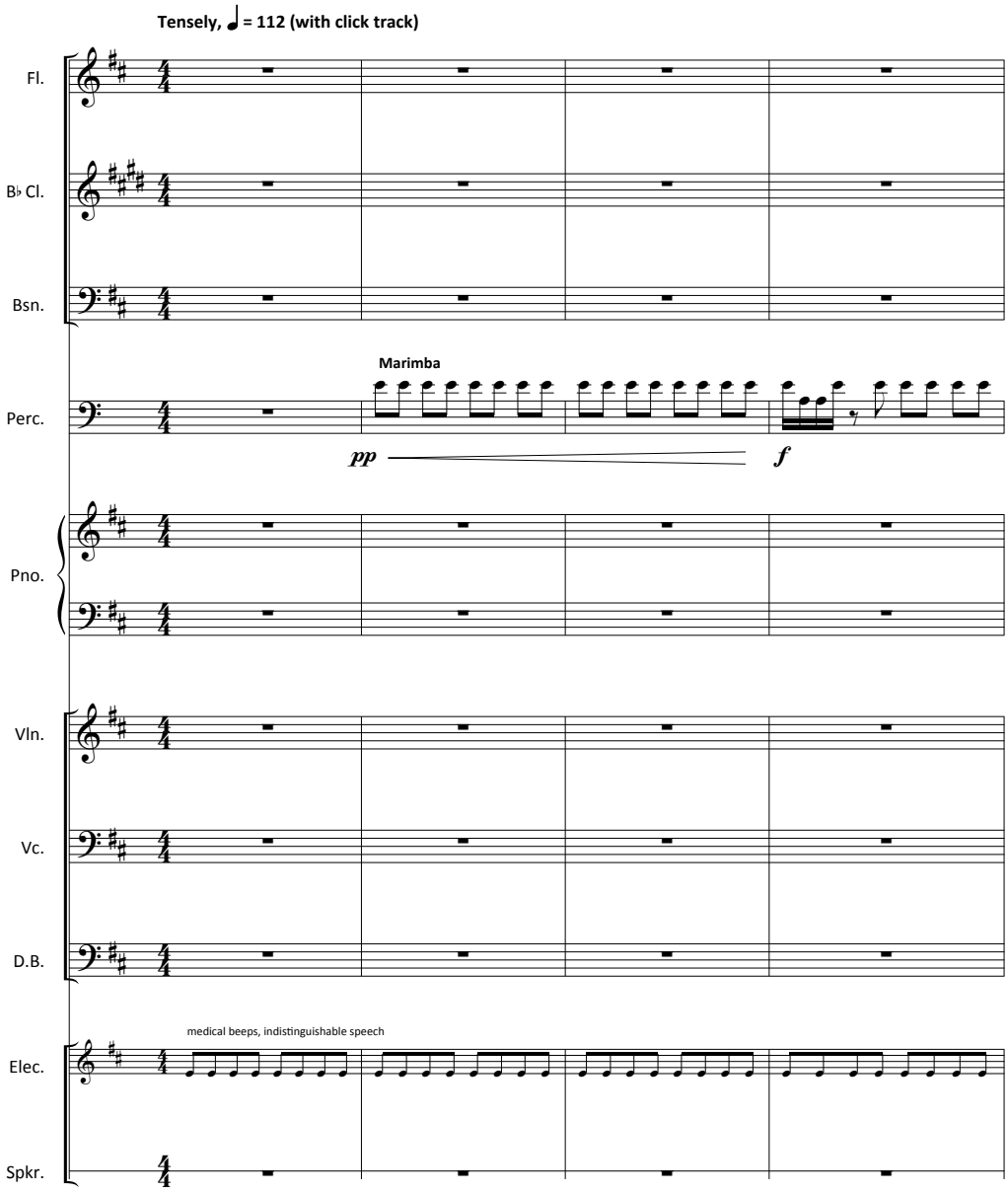

41
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.

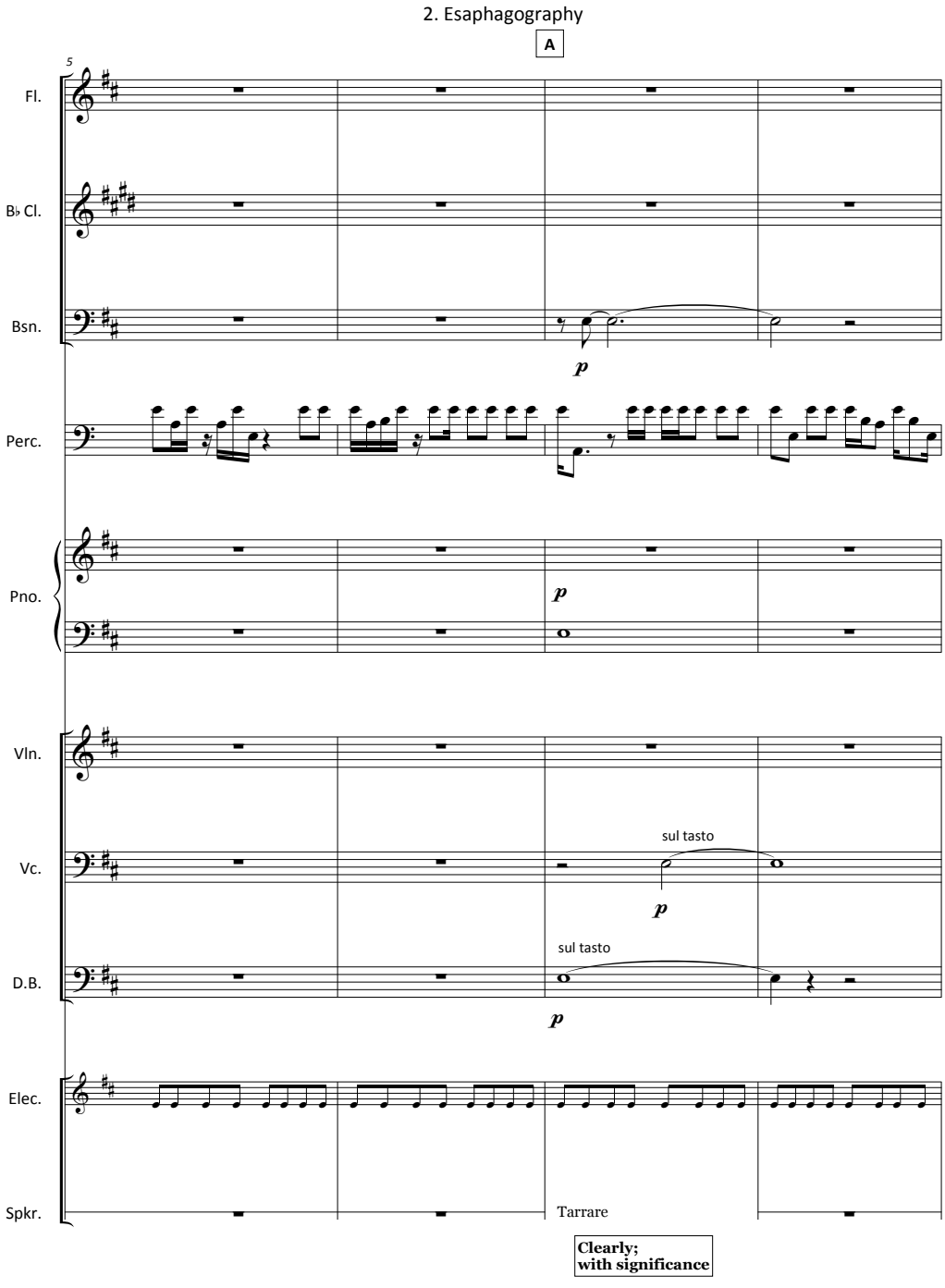
1. Prologue



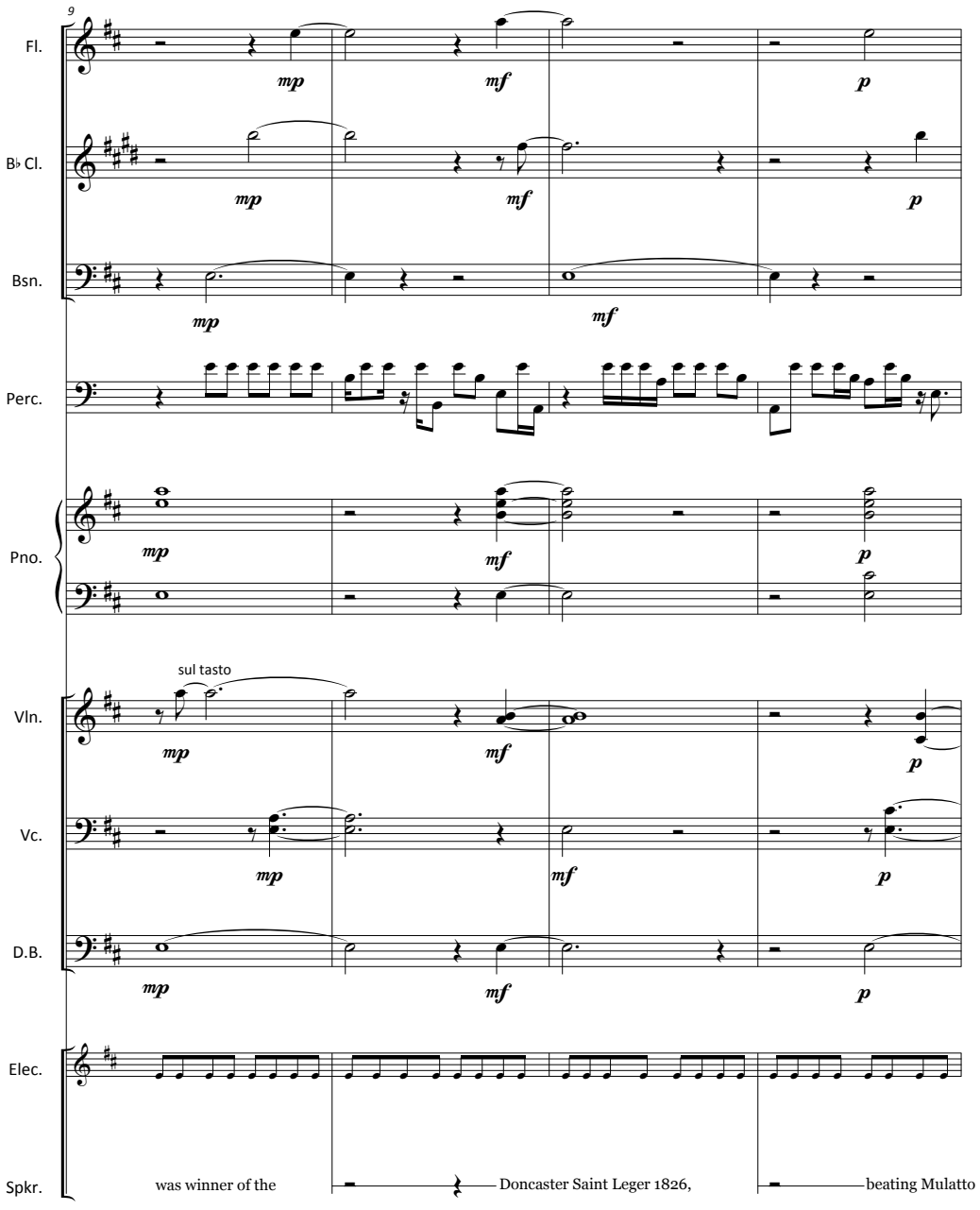
2. Esaphagography:

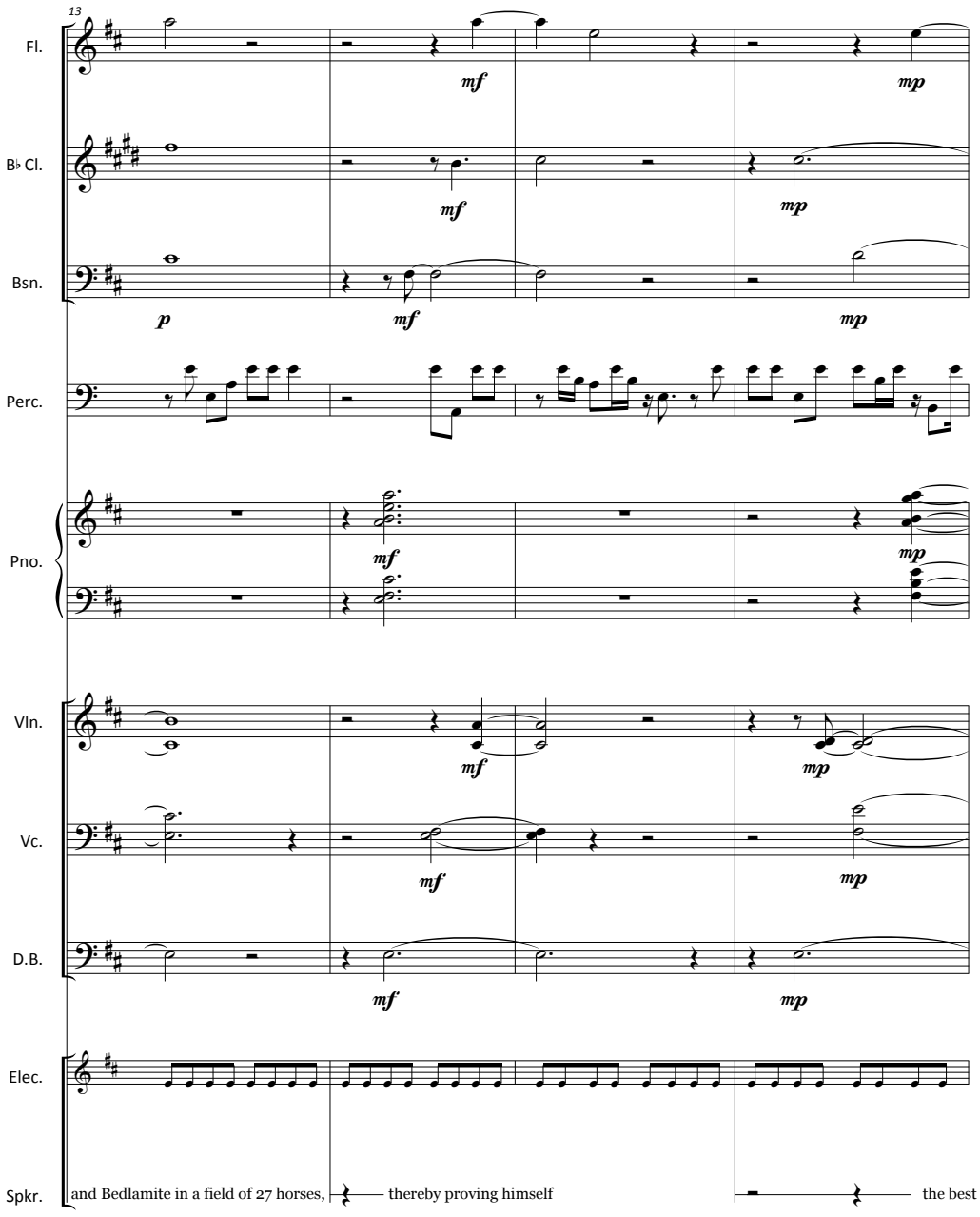
The Doncaster Saint Leger 1826 / An Horrible Corruption



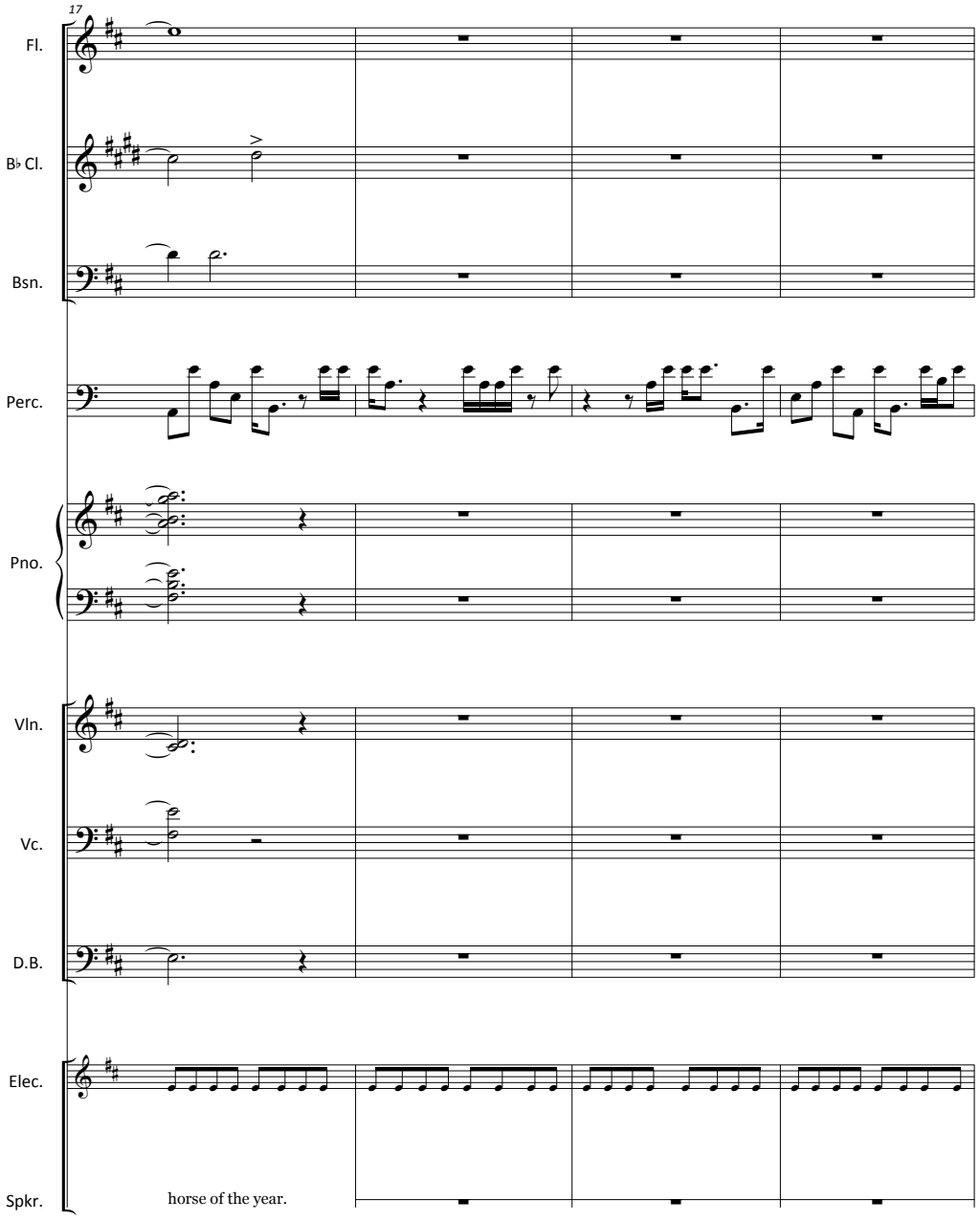

2. Esaphagography
A
5
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
p
Perc.
Pno.
p
Vln.
Vc.
sul tasto
p
D.B.
sul tasto
p
Elec.
Spkr.
Tarrare
Clearly;
with significance

2. Esaphagography




13
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.
mf
mp
p
and Bedlamite in a field of 27 horses,
thereby proving himself
the best

2. Esaphagography



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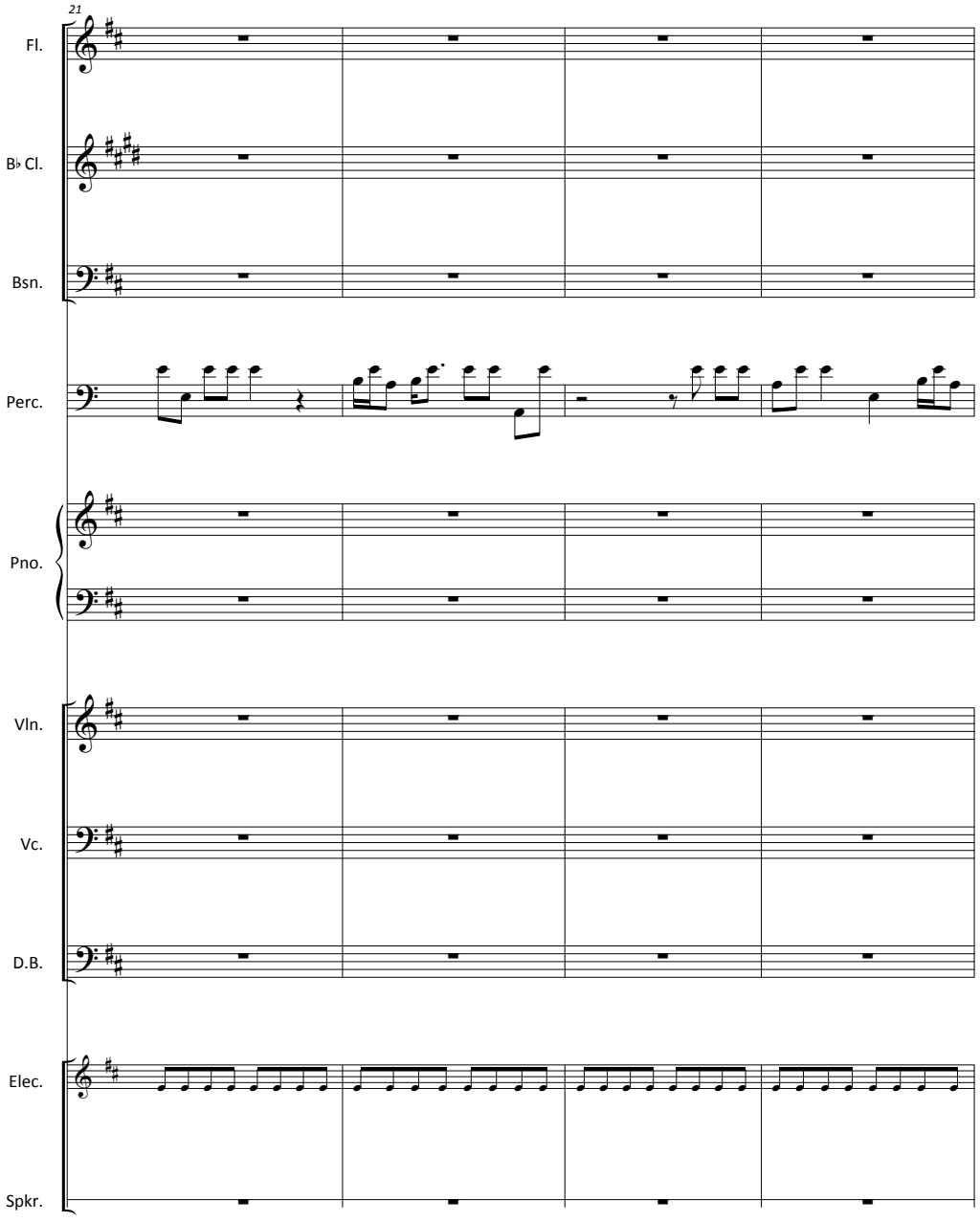

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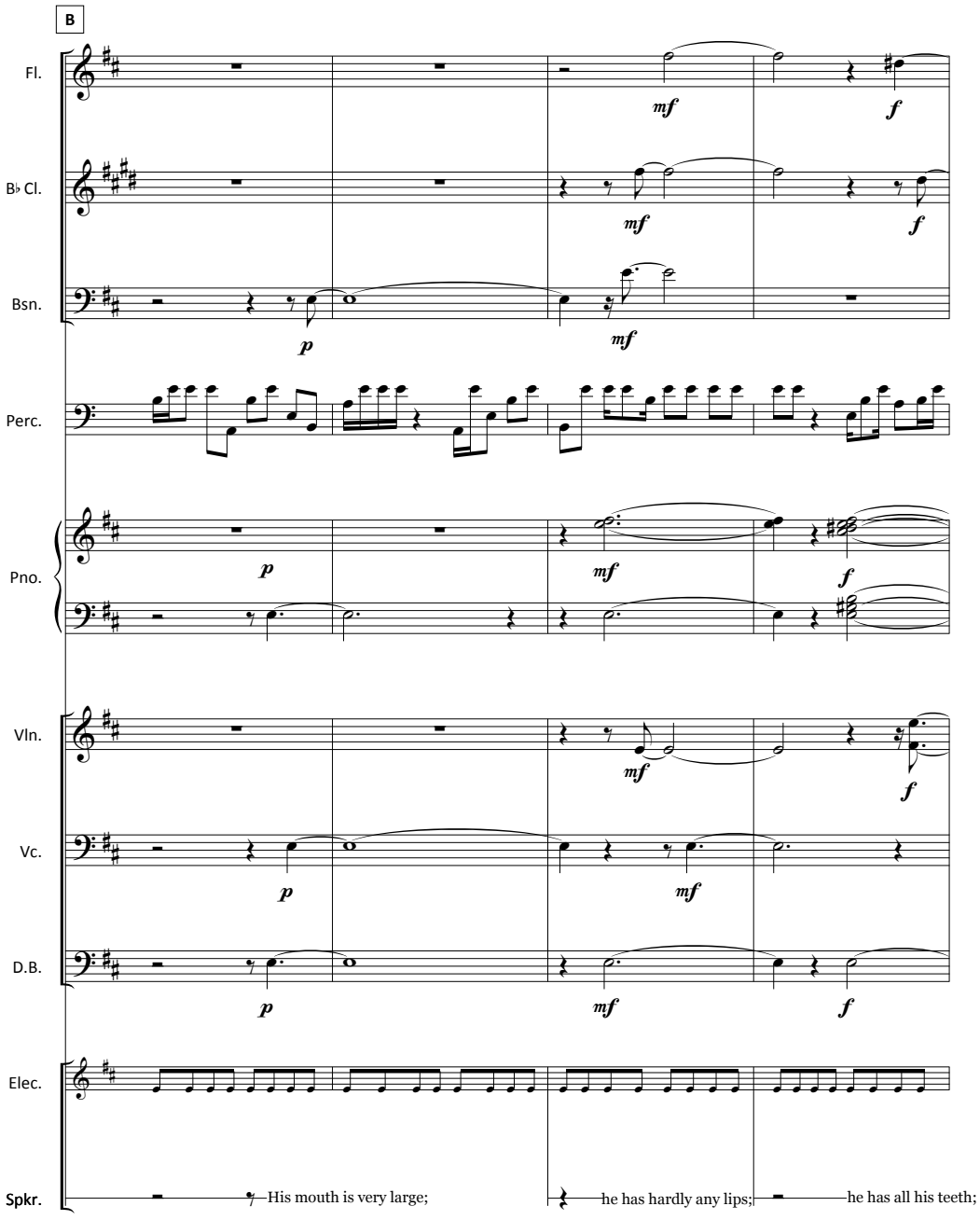

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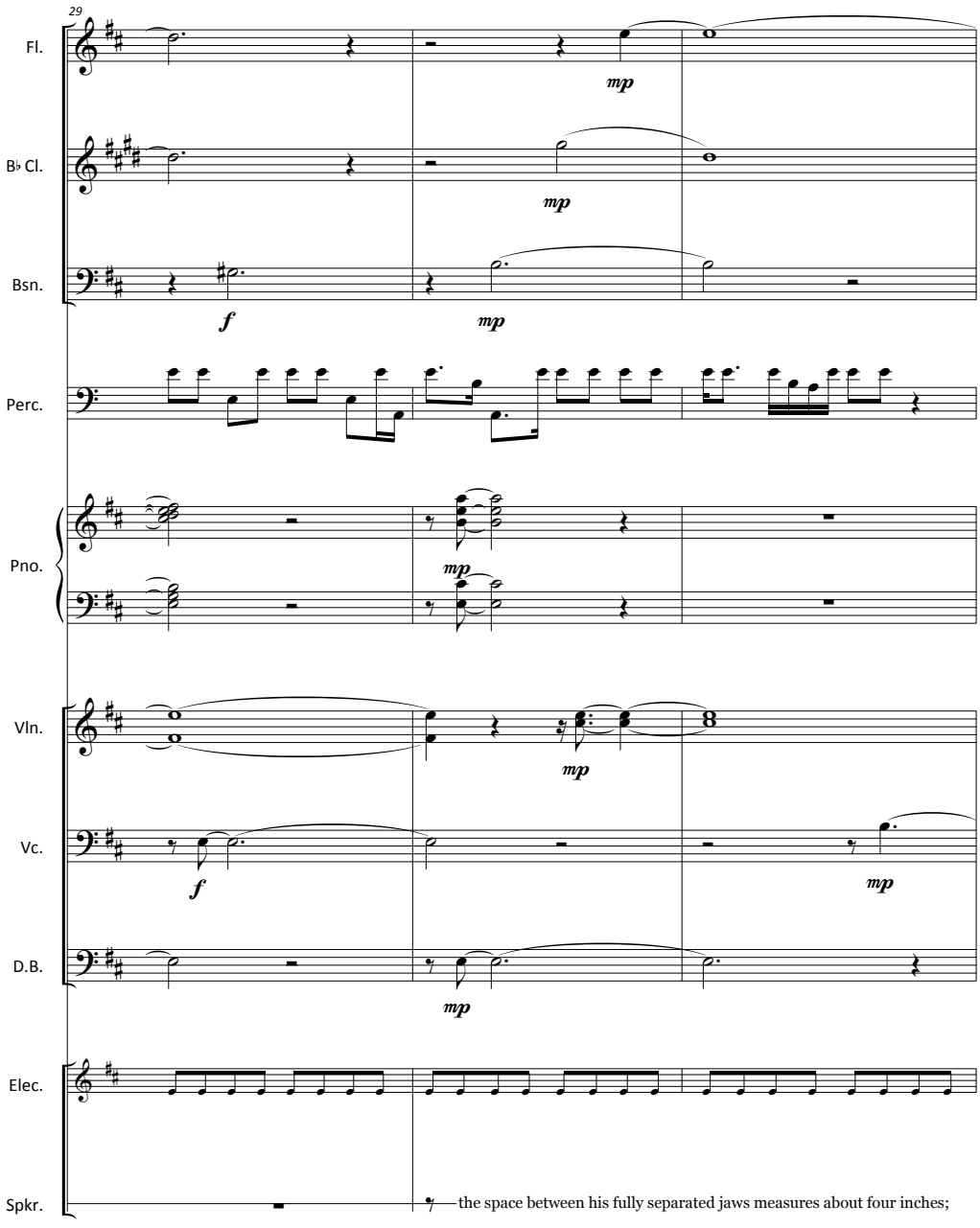

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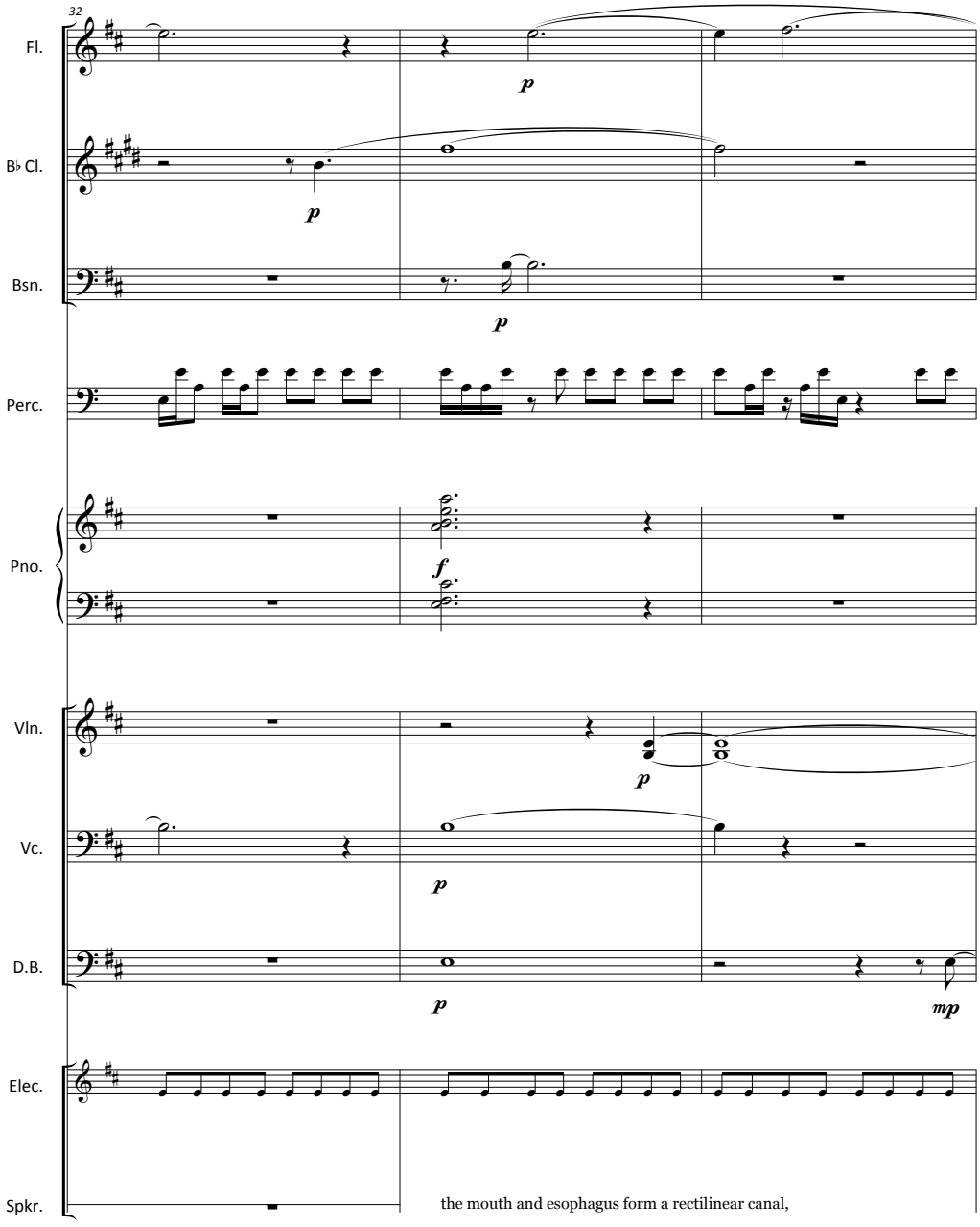

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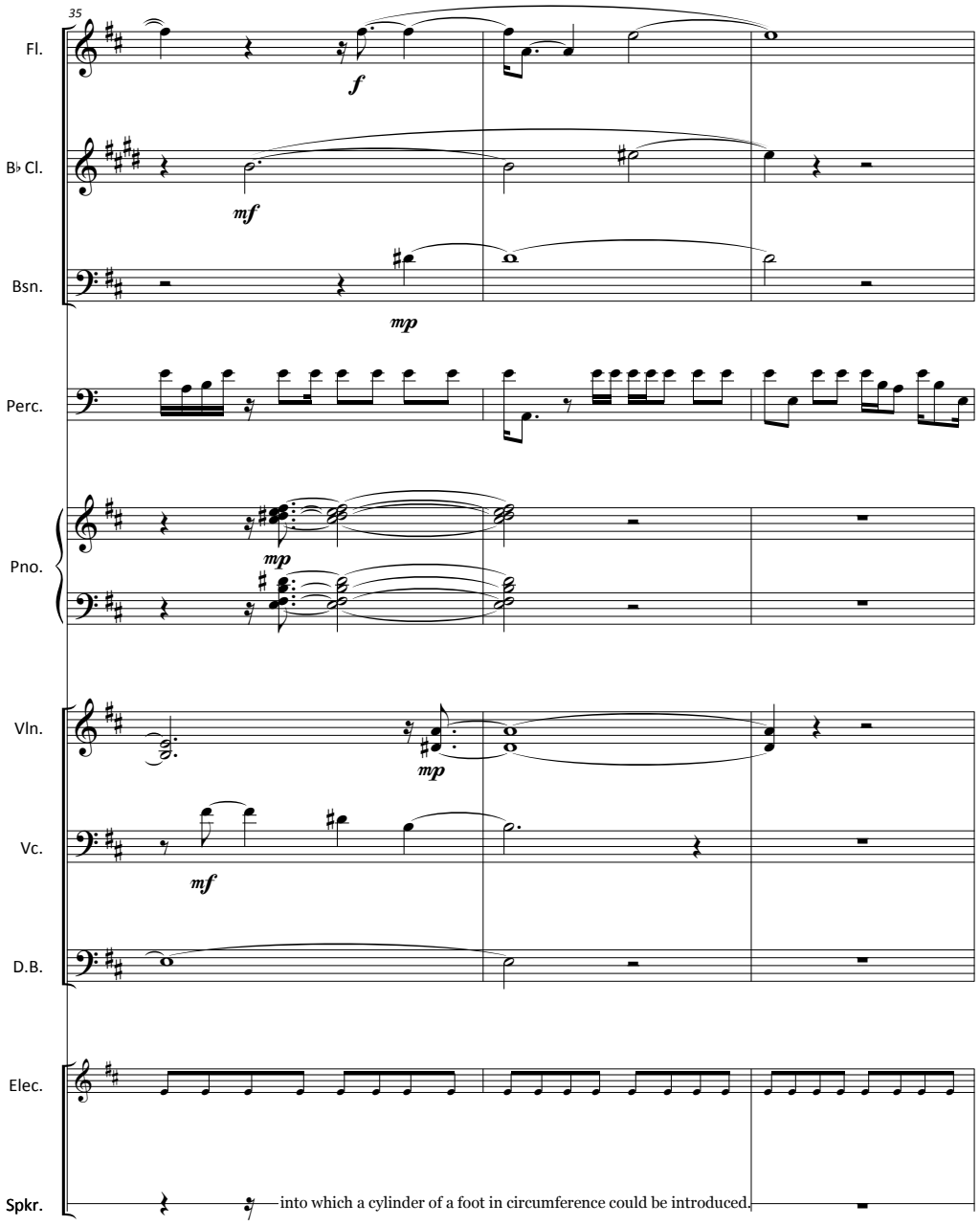

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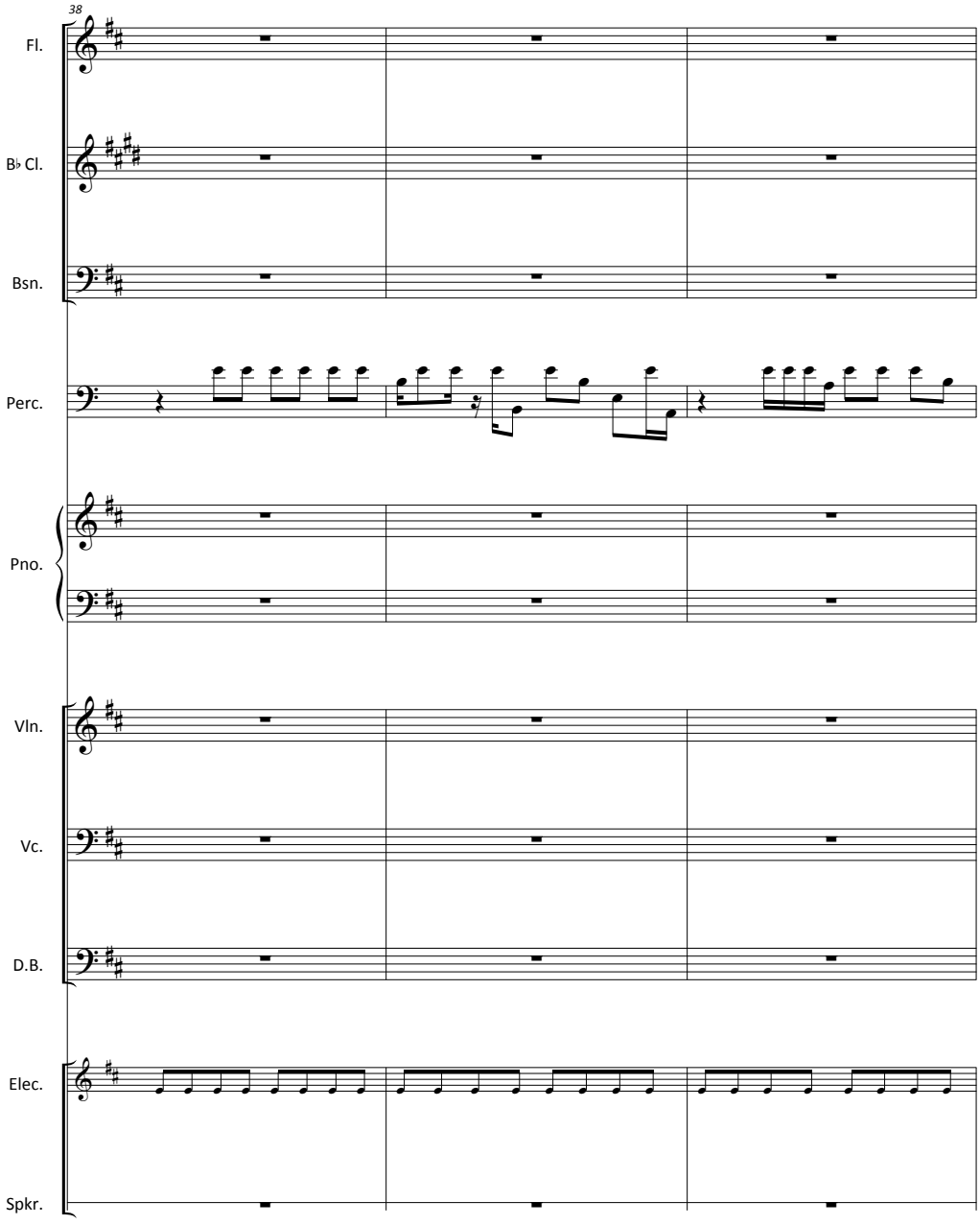
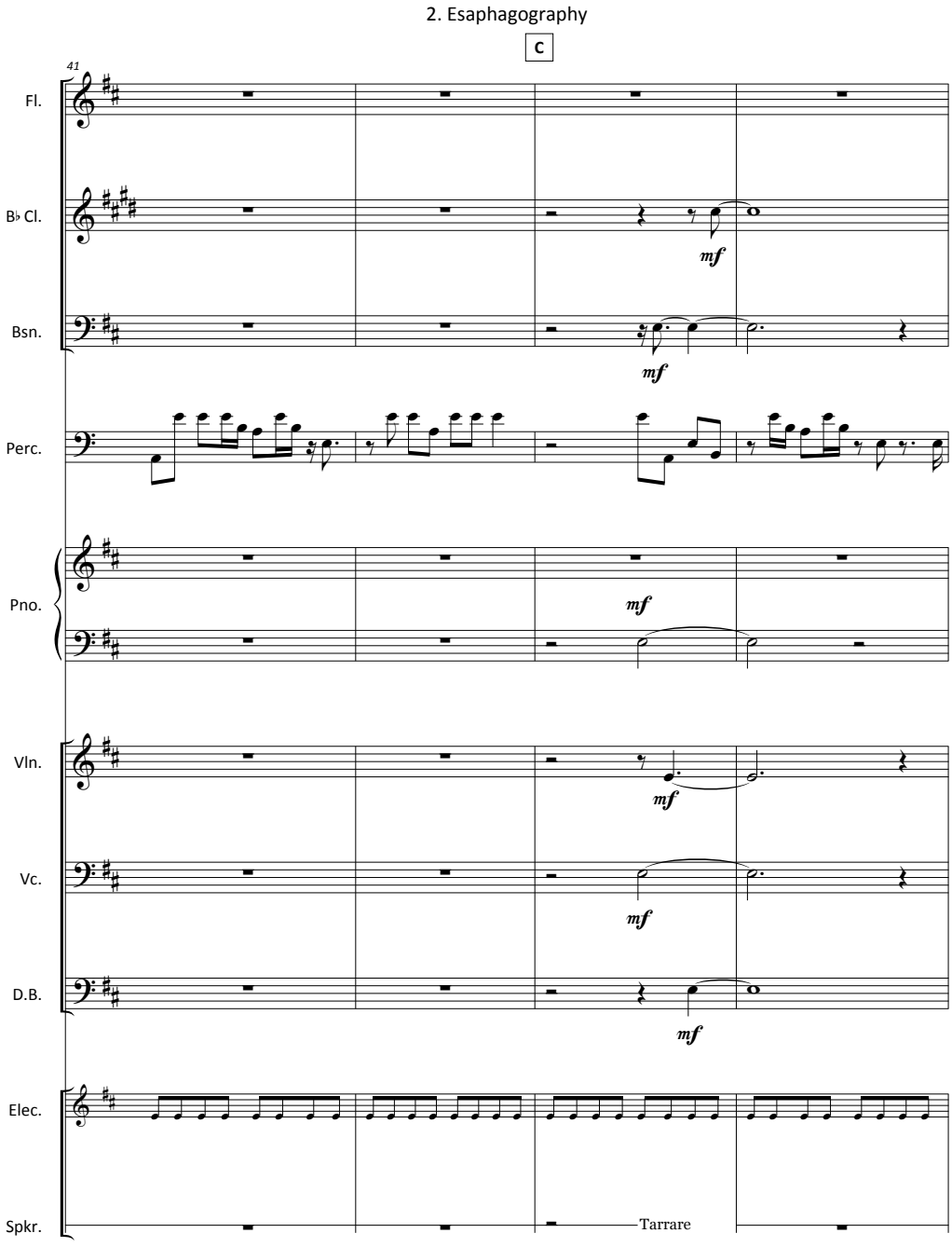
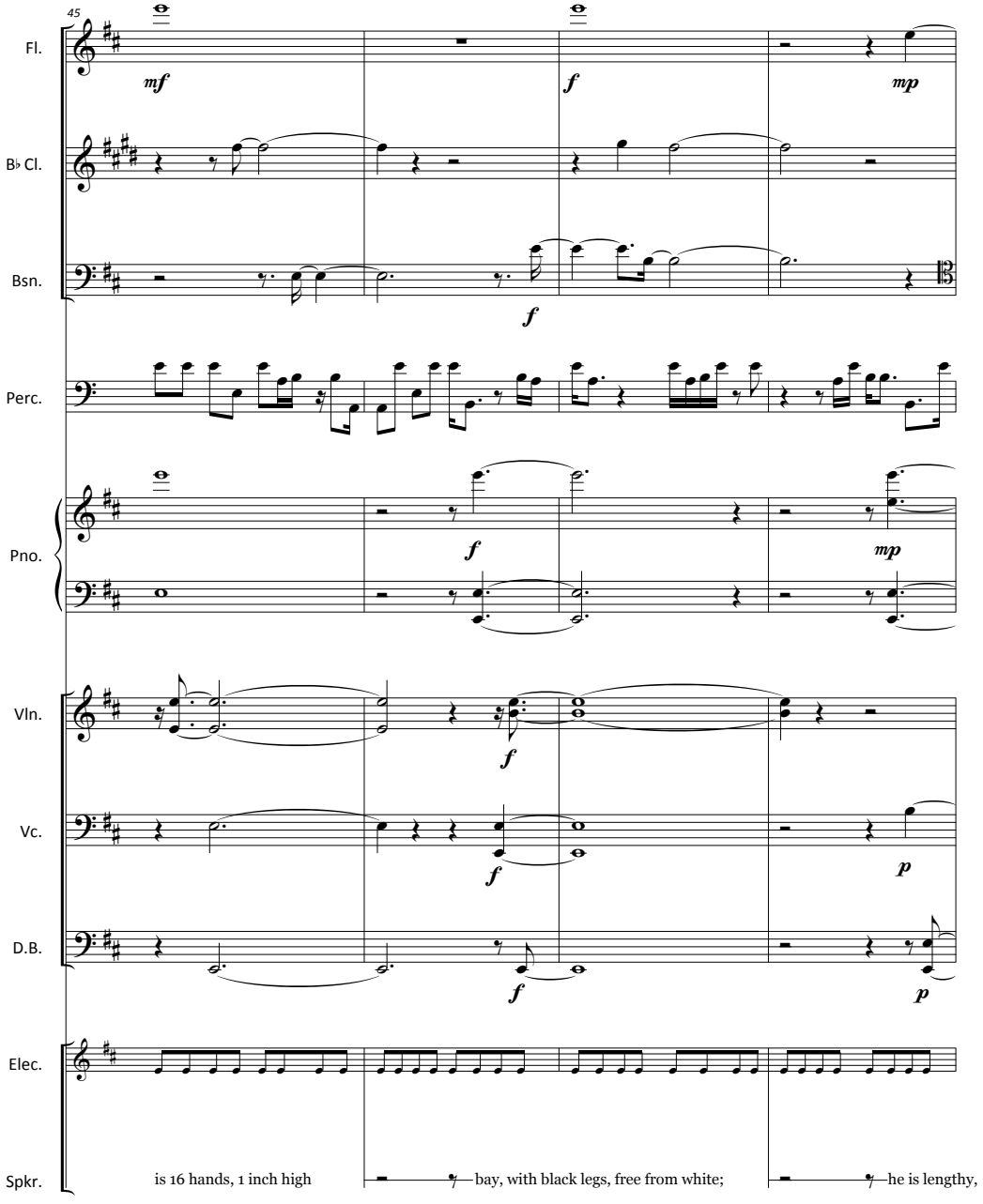
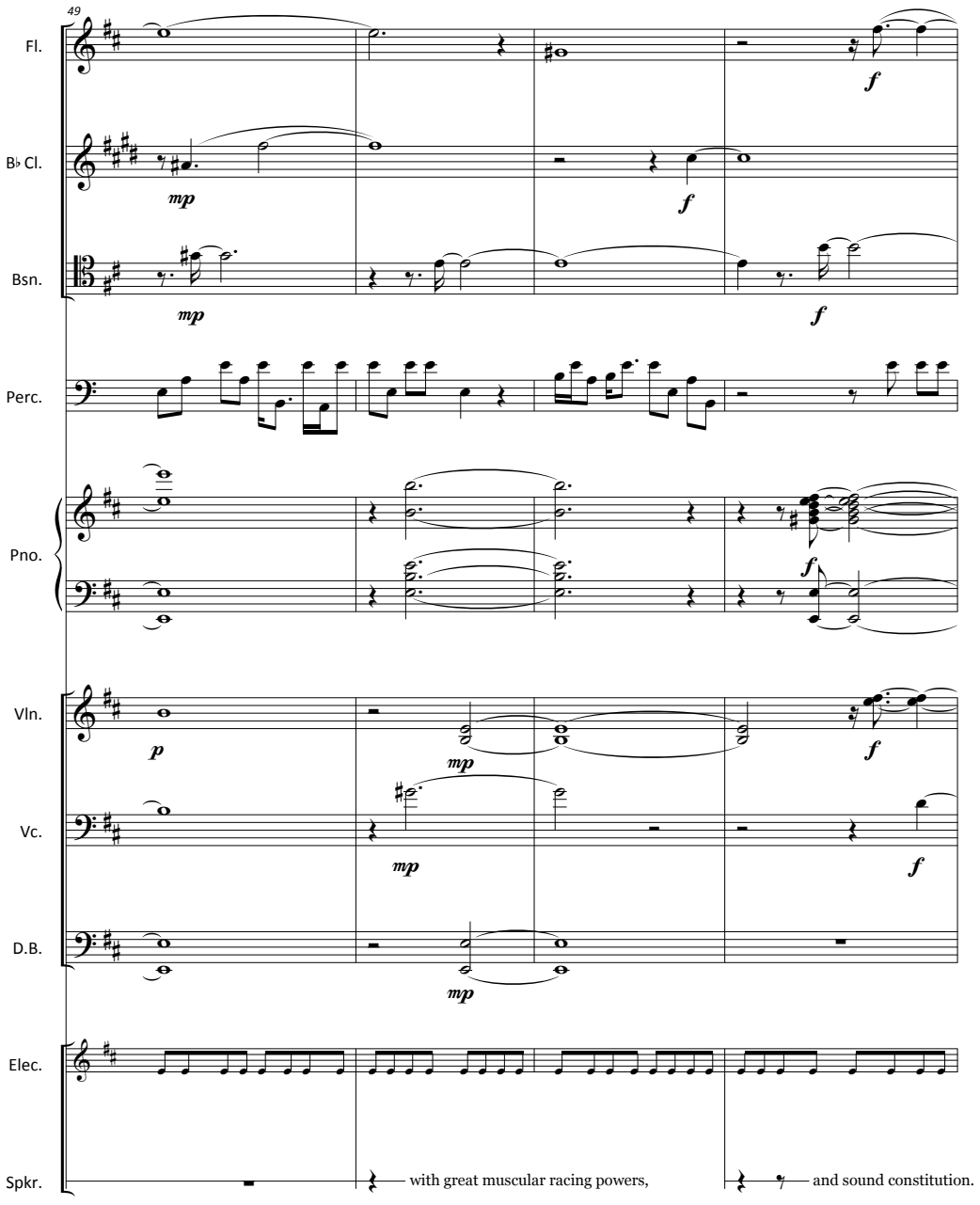


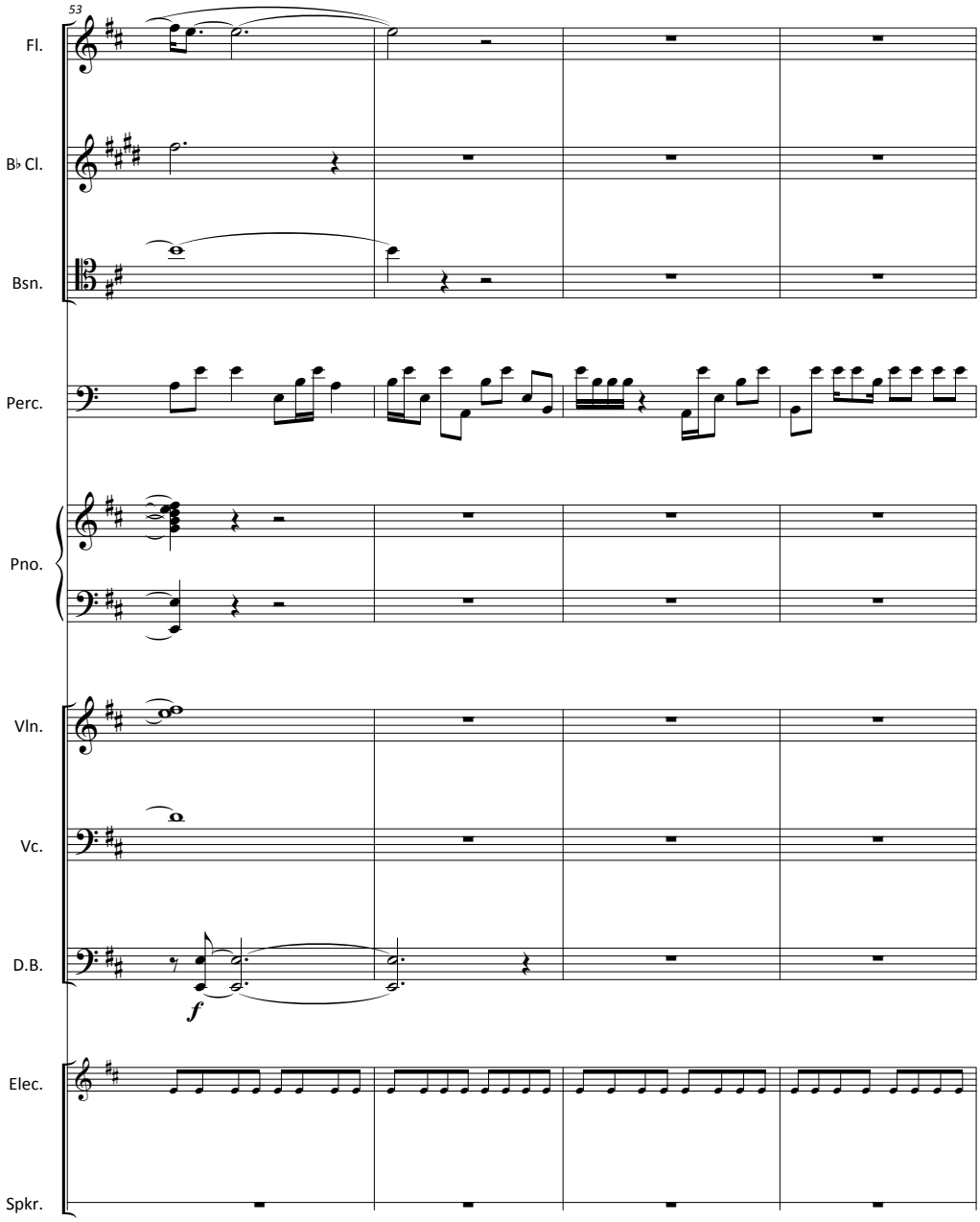

2. Esaphagography
C
41
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.
mf
Tarrare

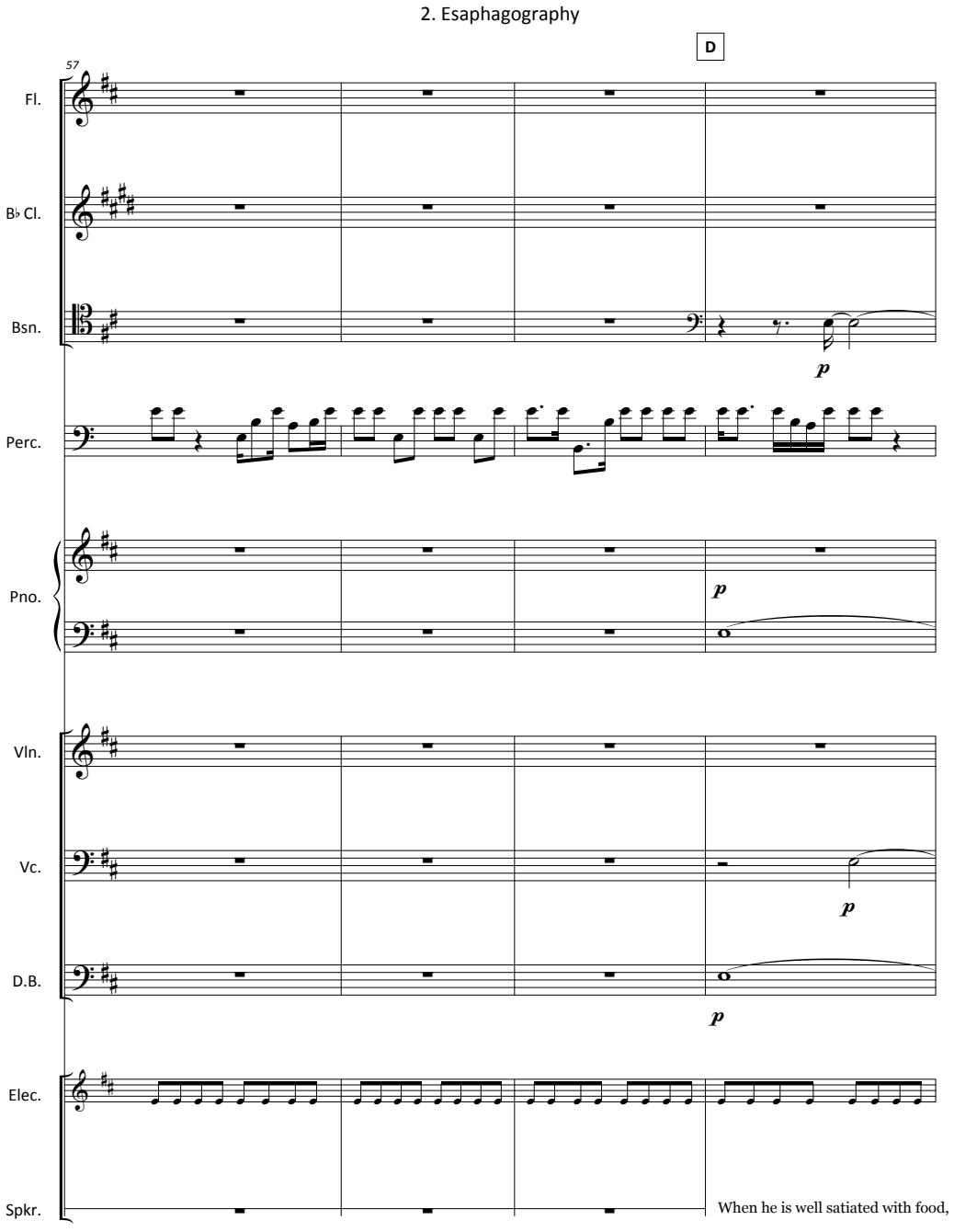
2. Esaphagography



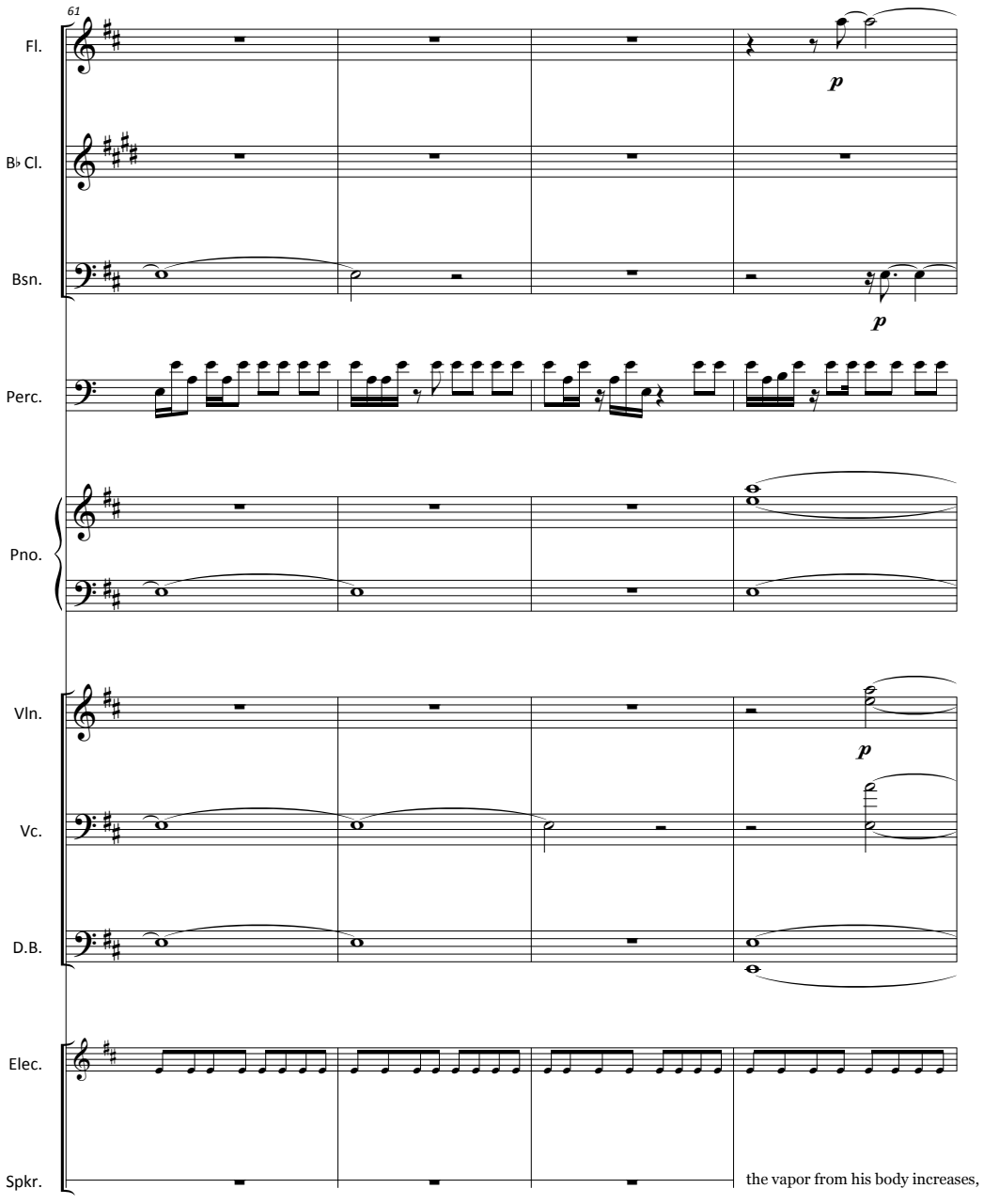

49
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.
with great muscular racing powers,
and sound constitution.

2. Esaphagography




2. Esaphagography
D
57
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.
p
p
p
p
When he is well satiated with food,

2. Esaphagography



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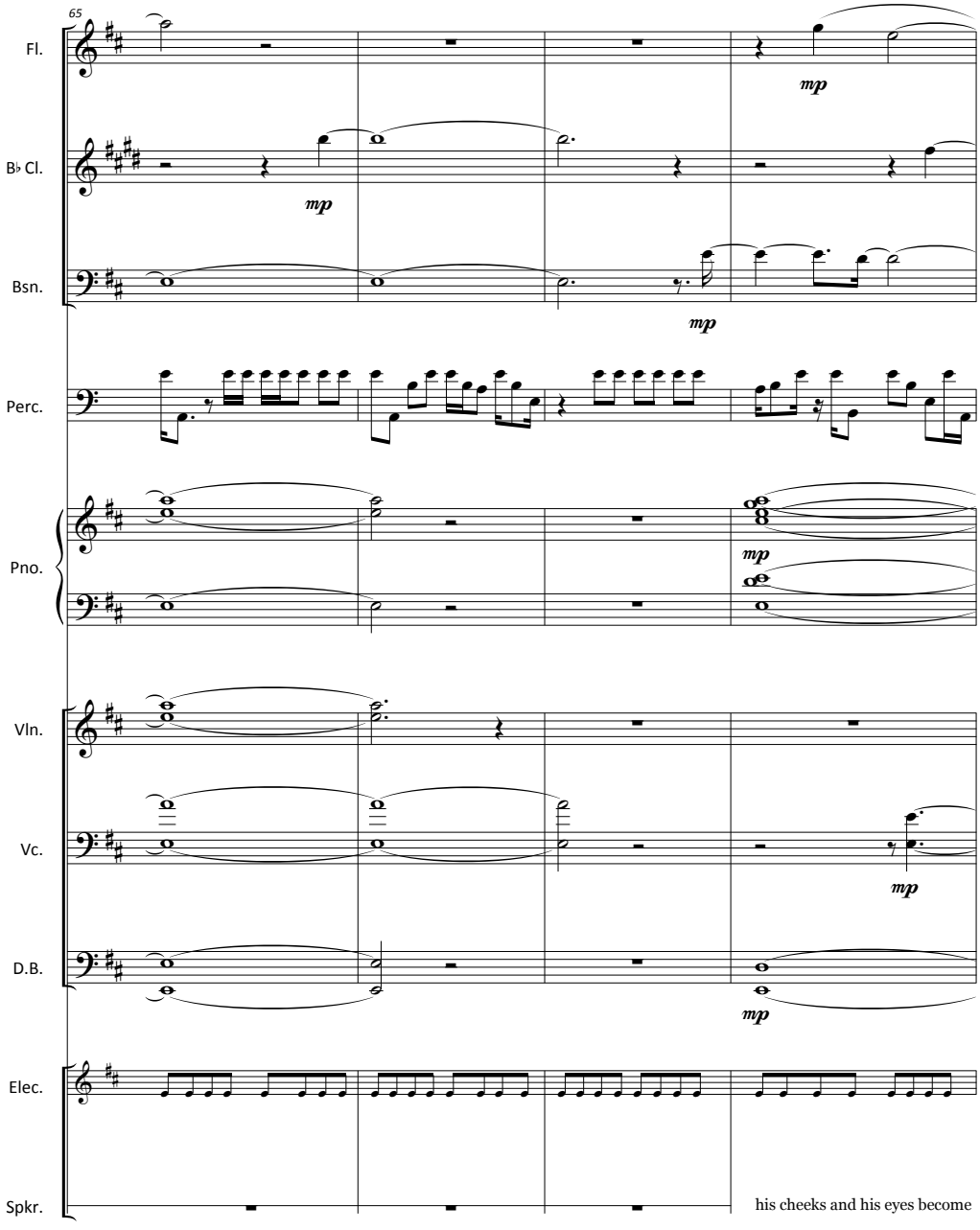

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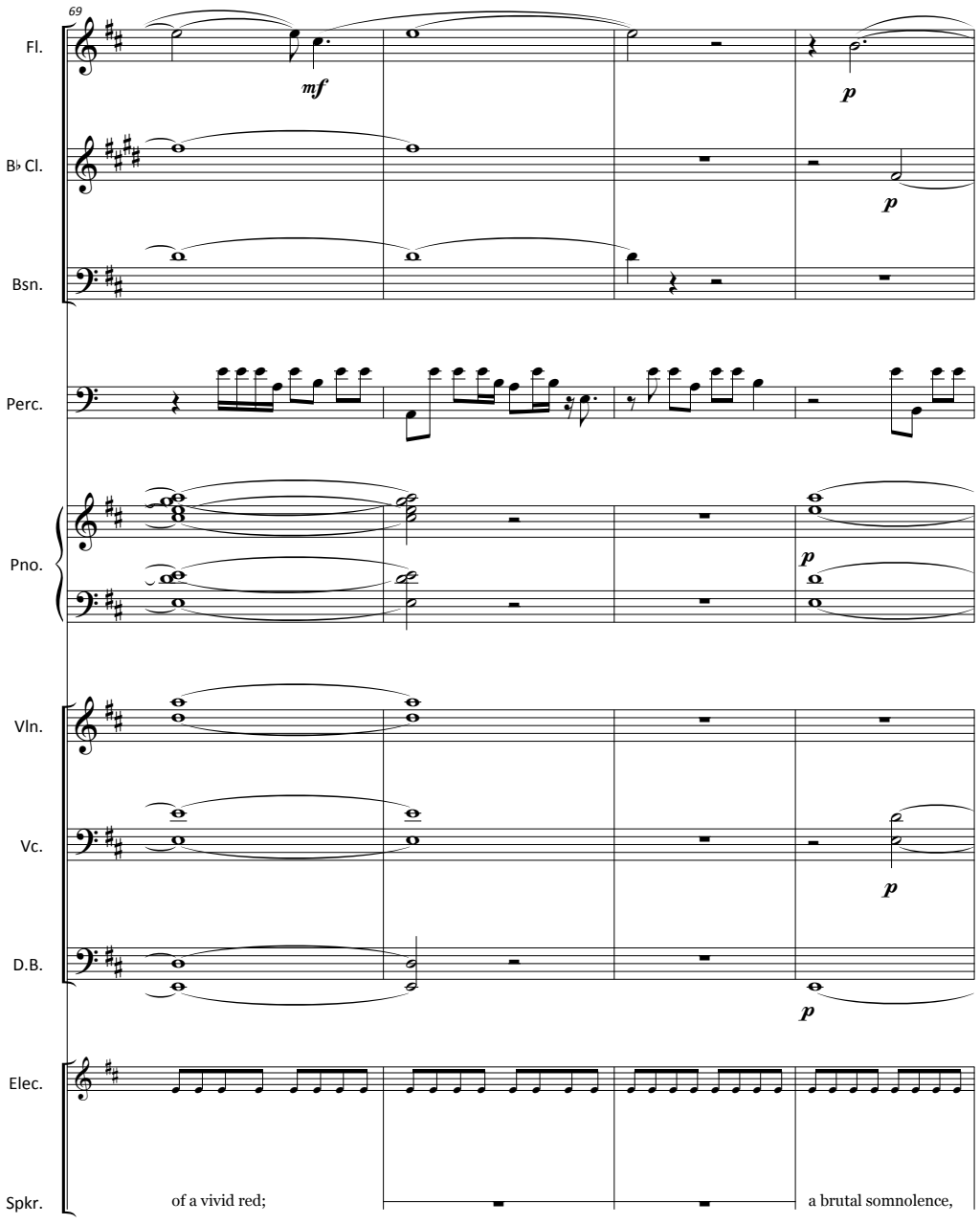
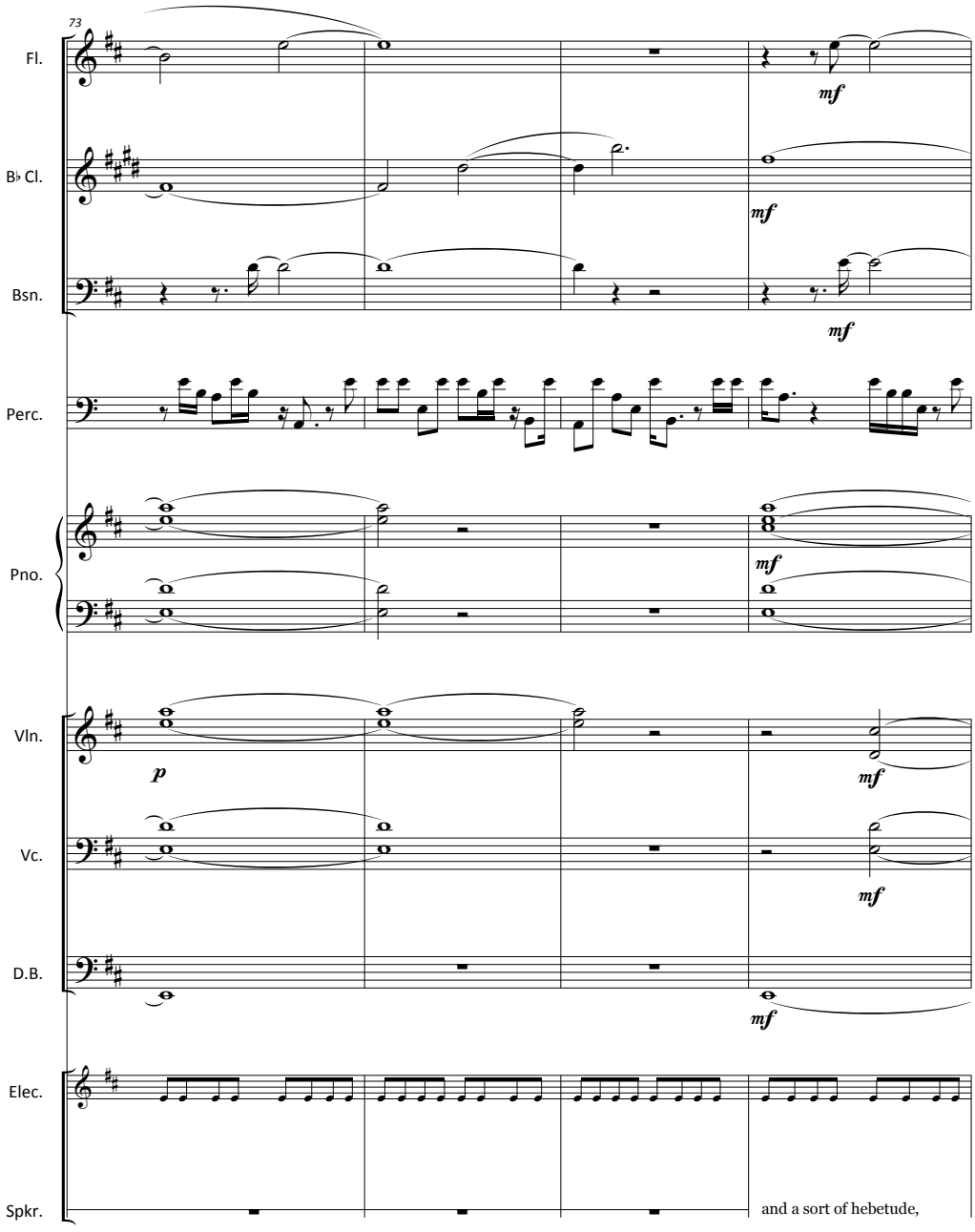
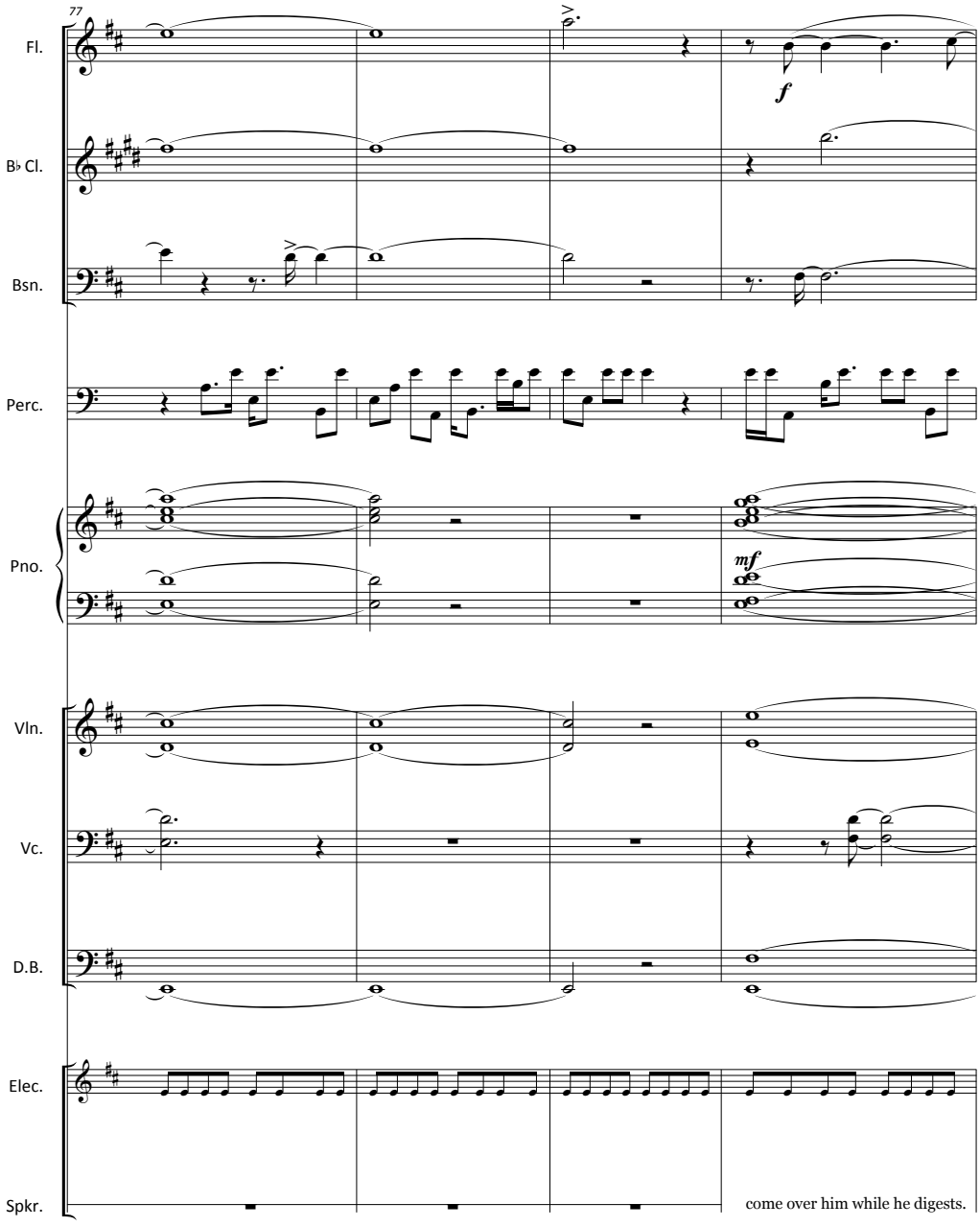
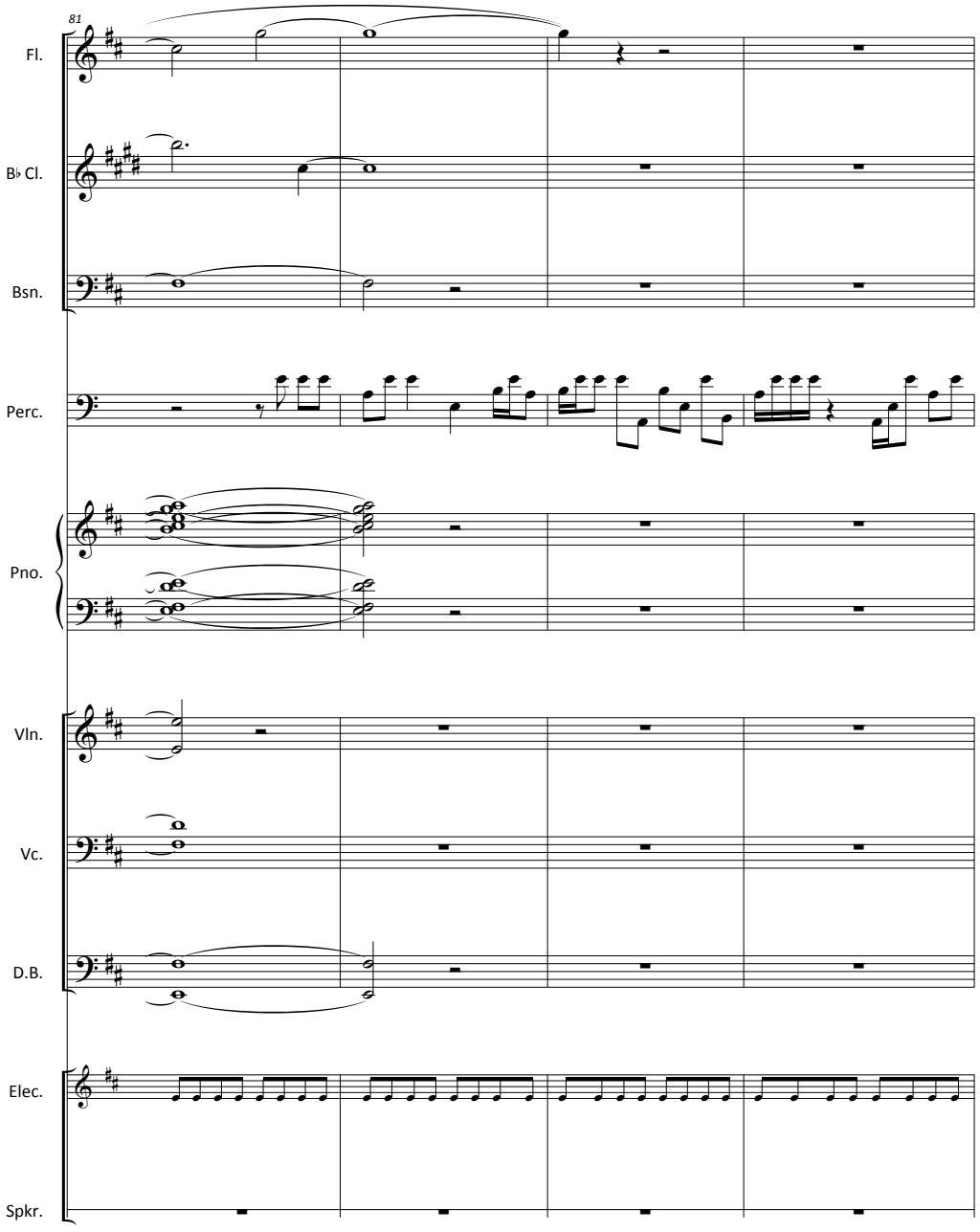


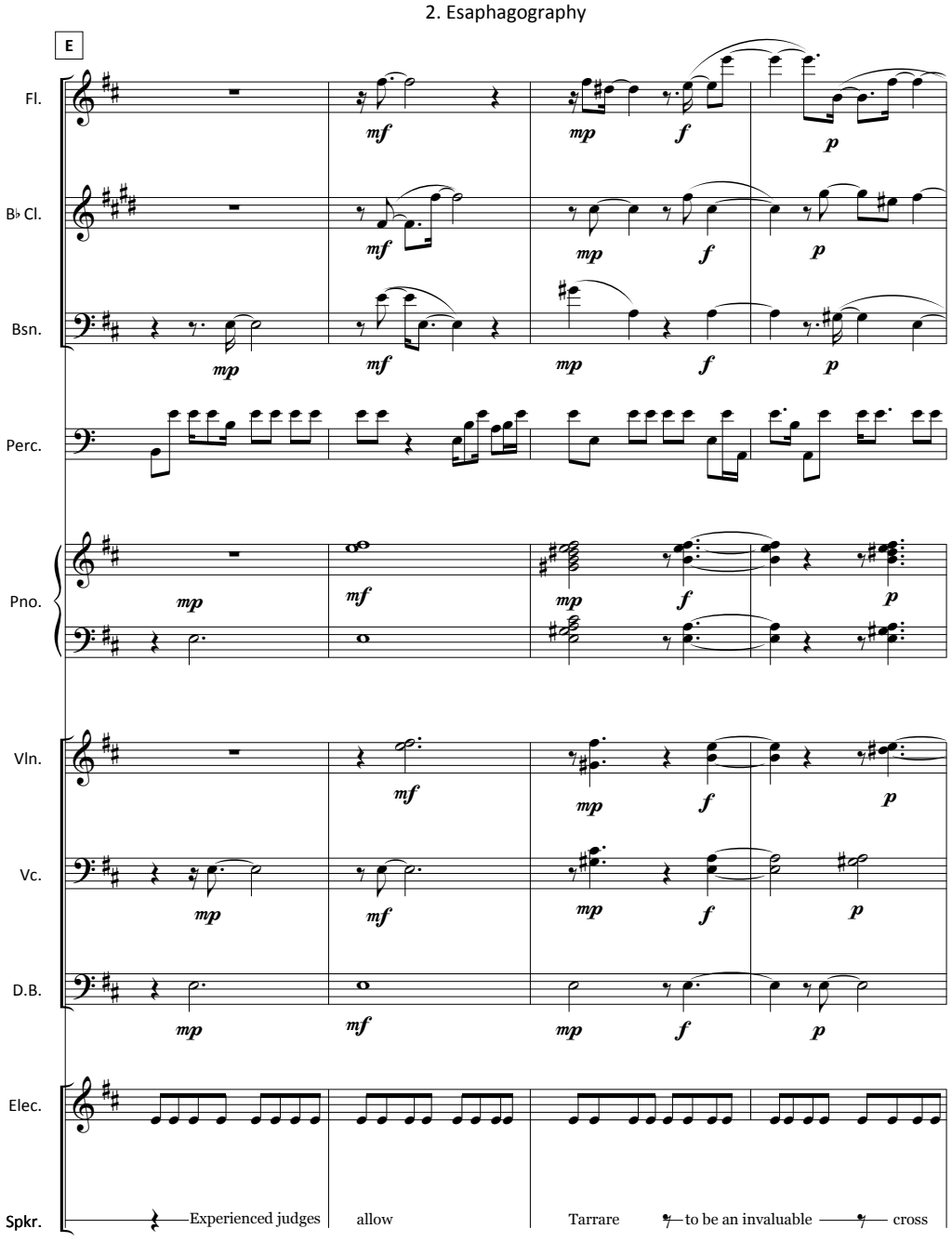

73
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.
mf
p
and a sort of hebetude,

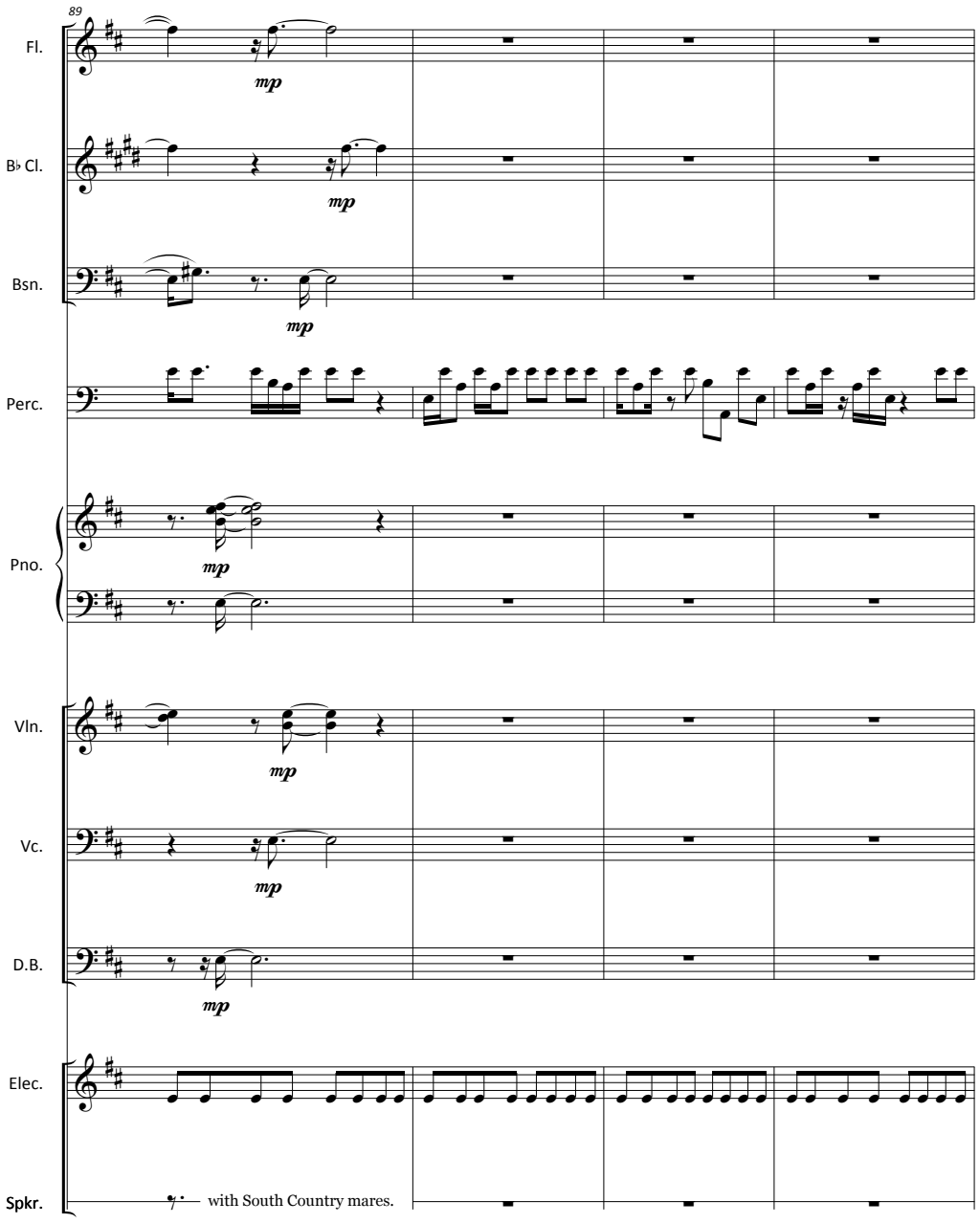
2. Esaphagography



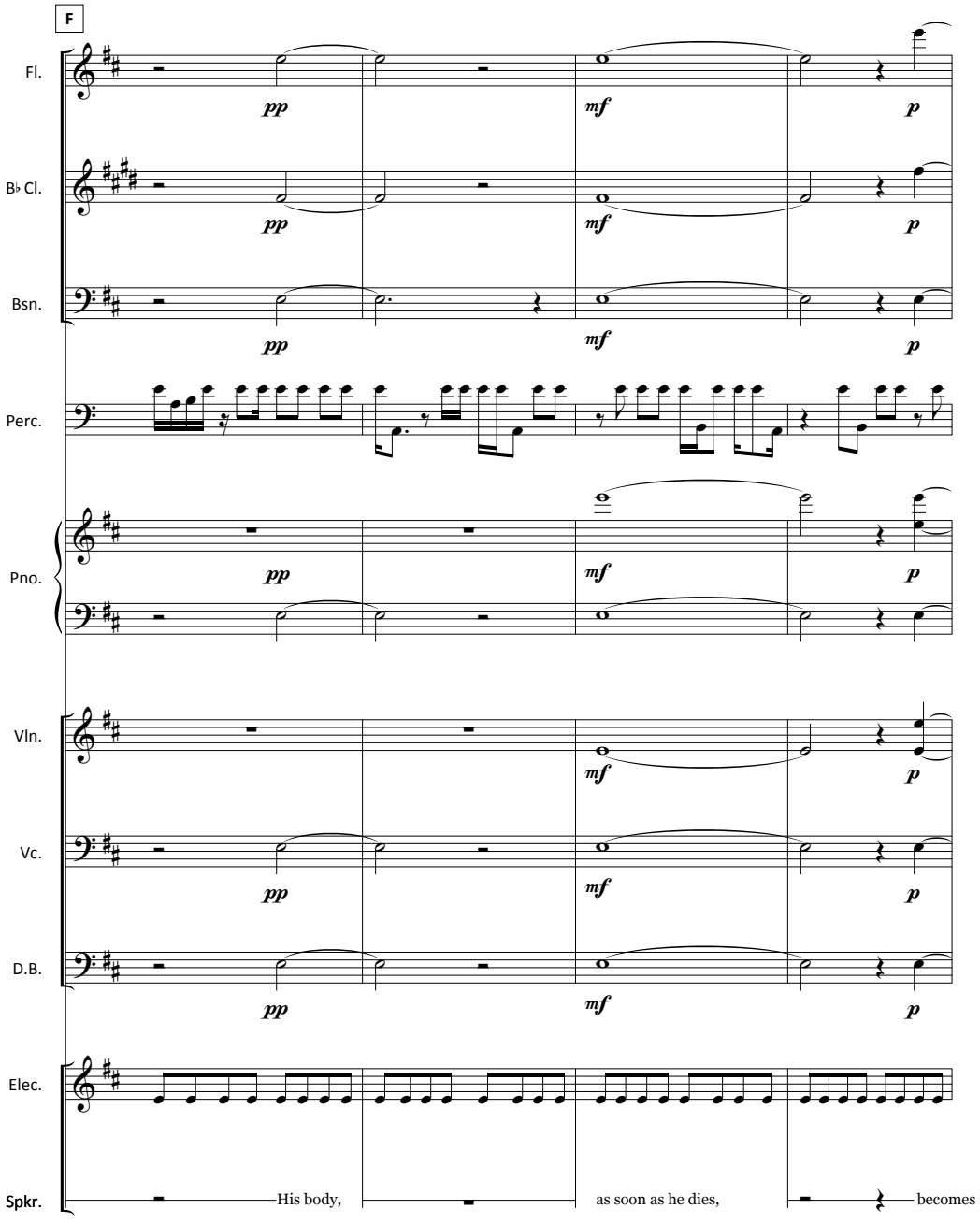
2. Esaphagography



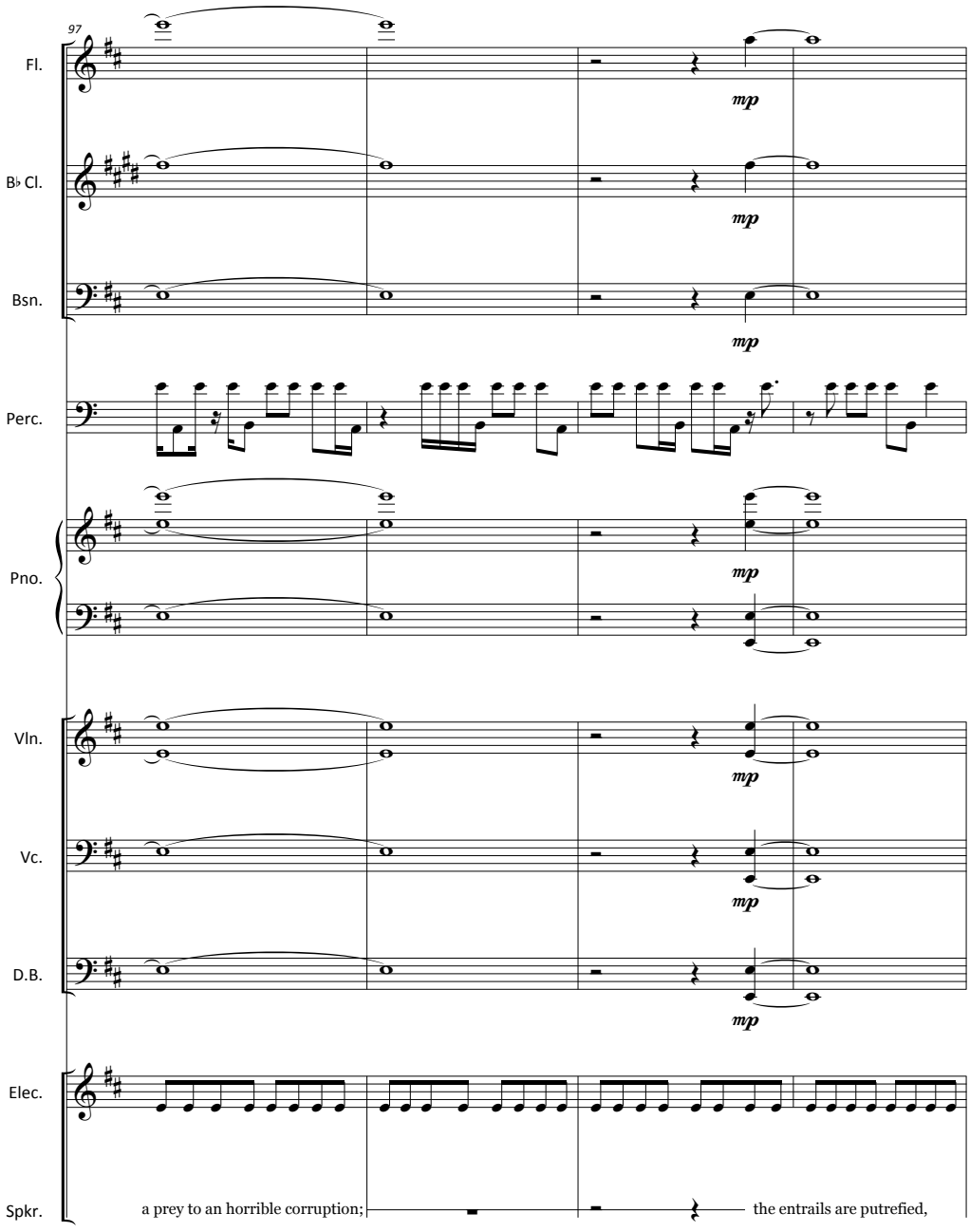

2. Esaphagography
E
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Elec.
Spkr.
Experienced judges
allow
Tarrare
to be an invaluable
cross


89
Fl.
mp
B♭ Cl.
mp
Bsn.
mp
Perc.
Pno.
mp
Vln.
mp
Vc.
mp
D.B.
mp
Elec.
Spkr.
with South Country mares.

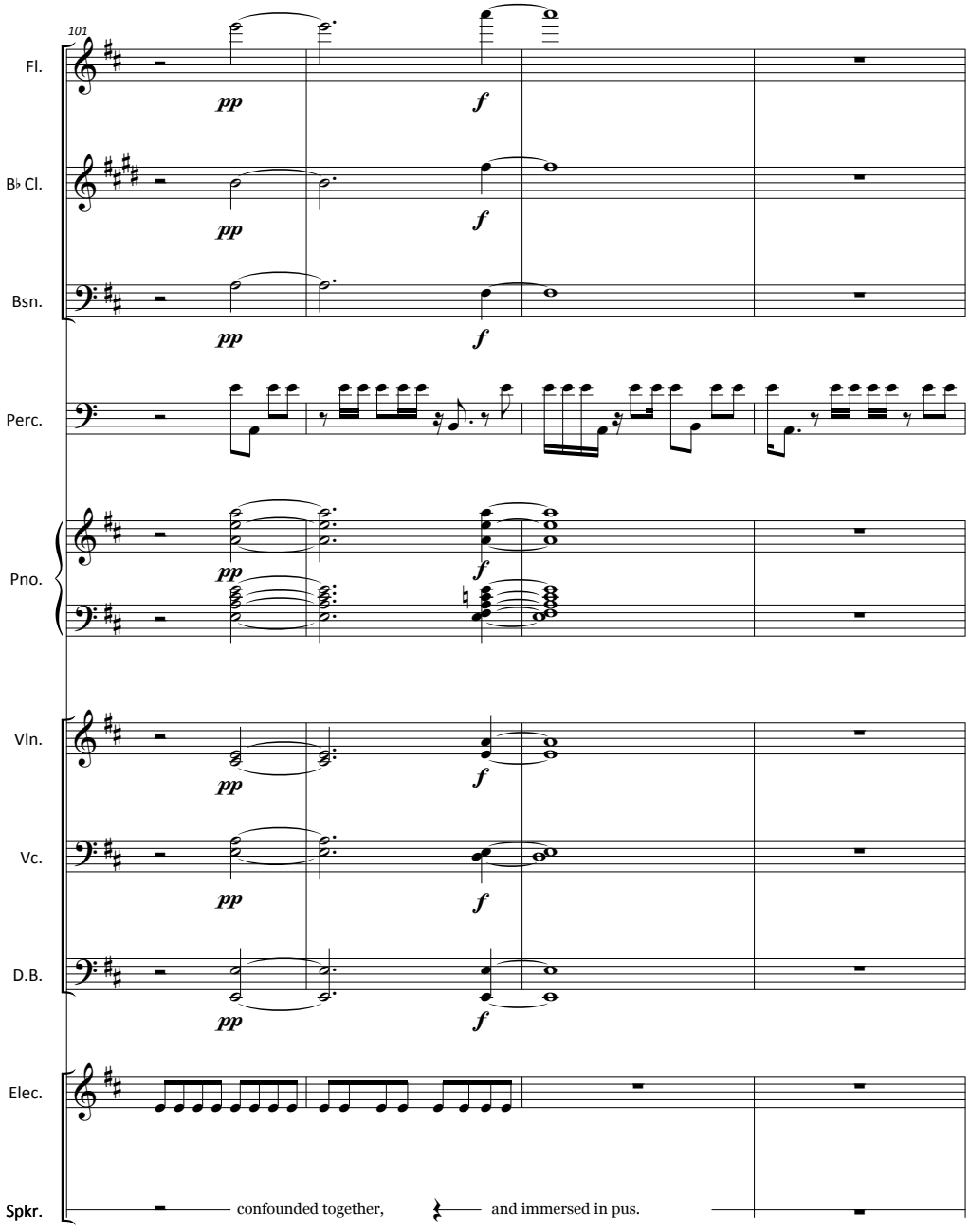
2. Esaphagography



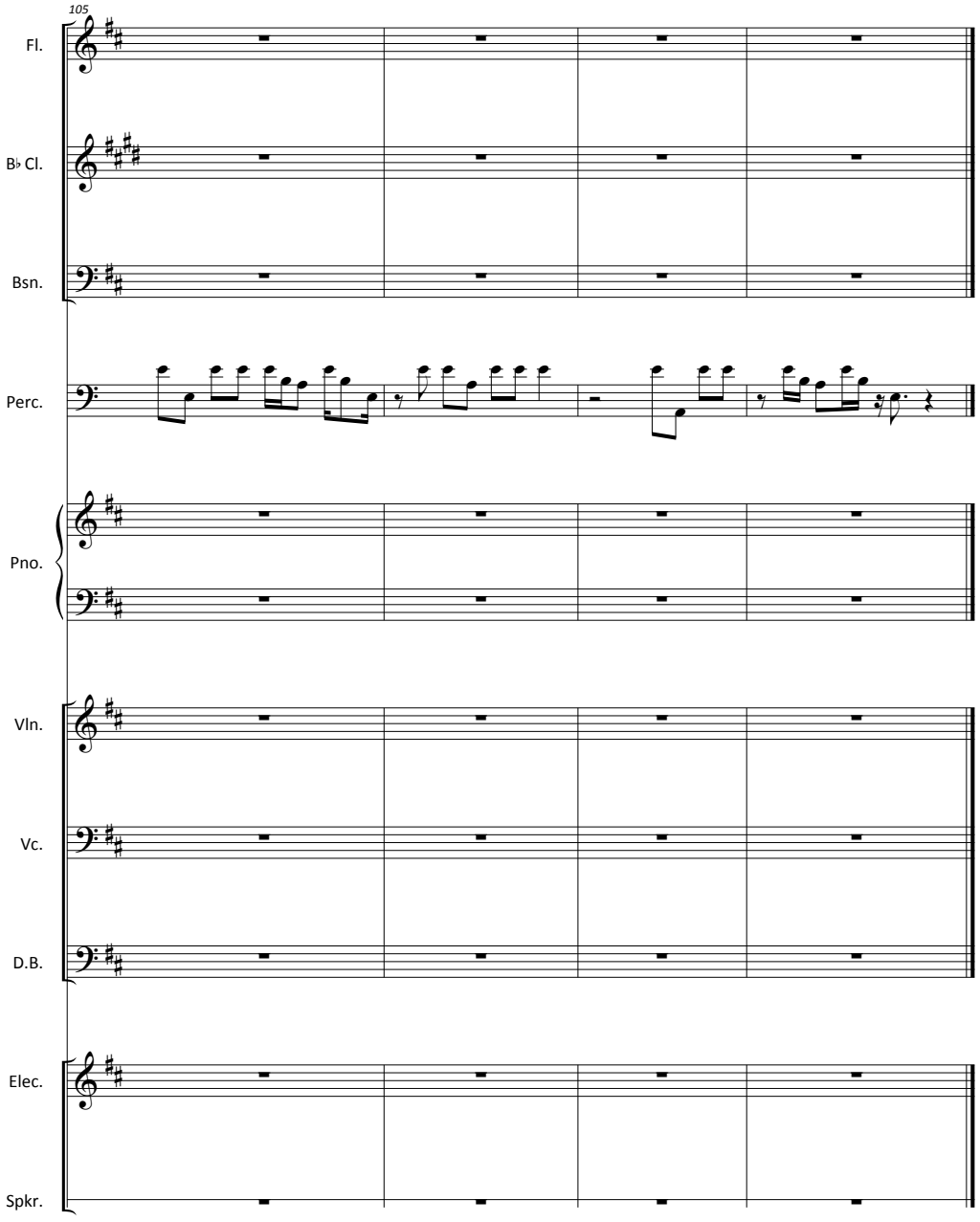
2. Esaphagography



2. Esaphagography

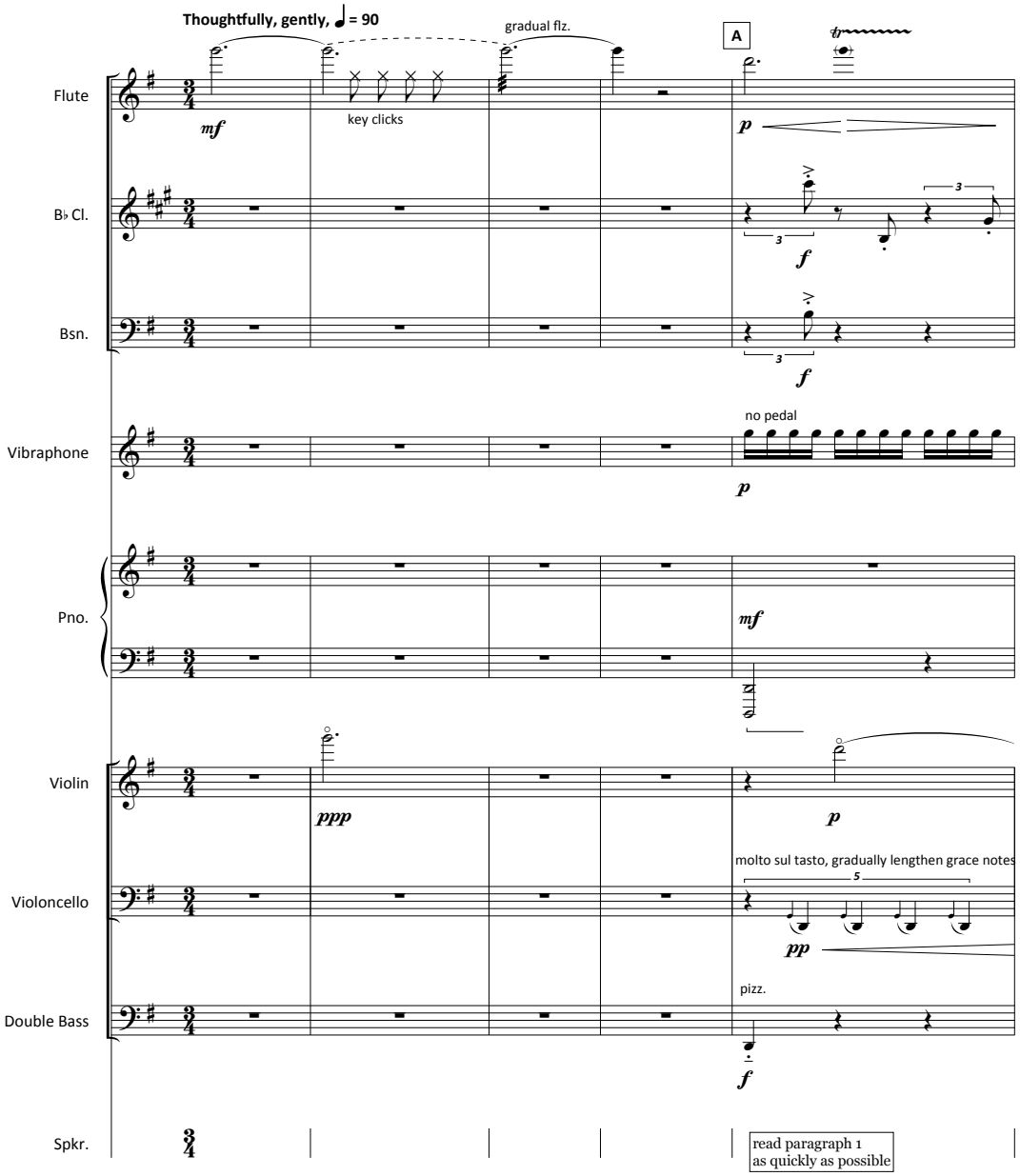


2. Esaphagography

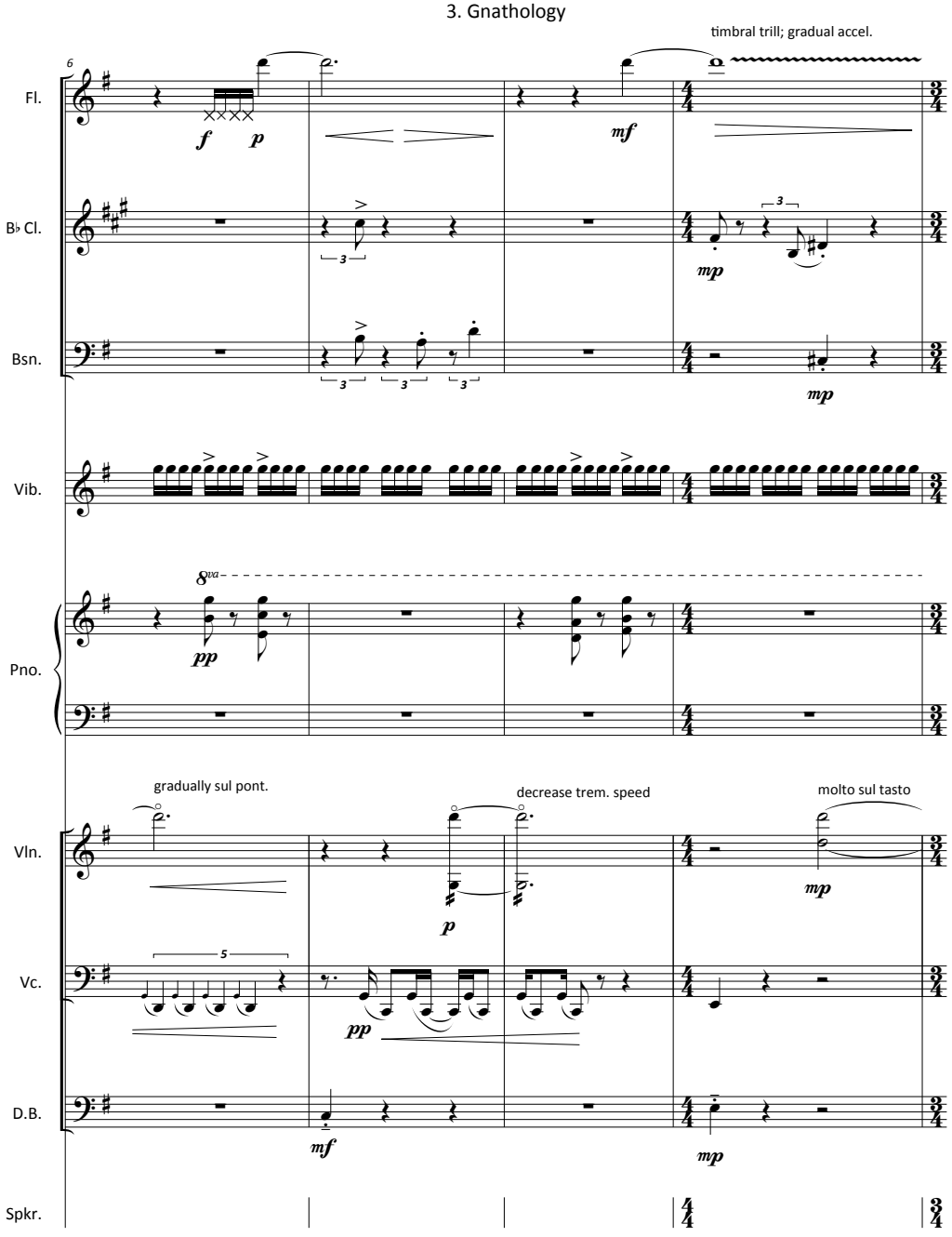


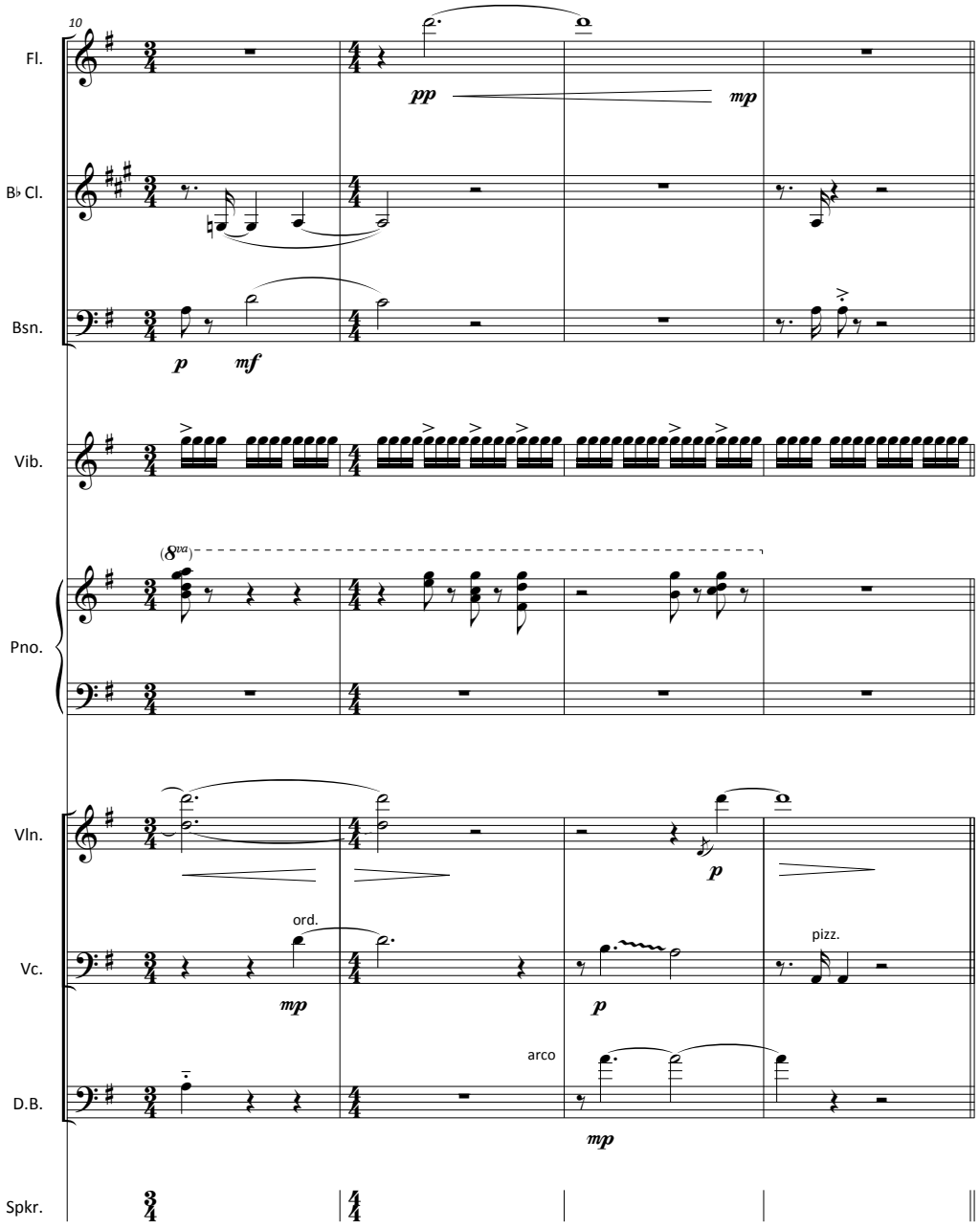
3. Gnathology

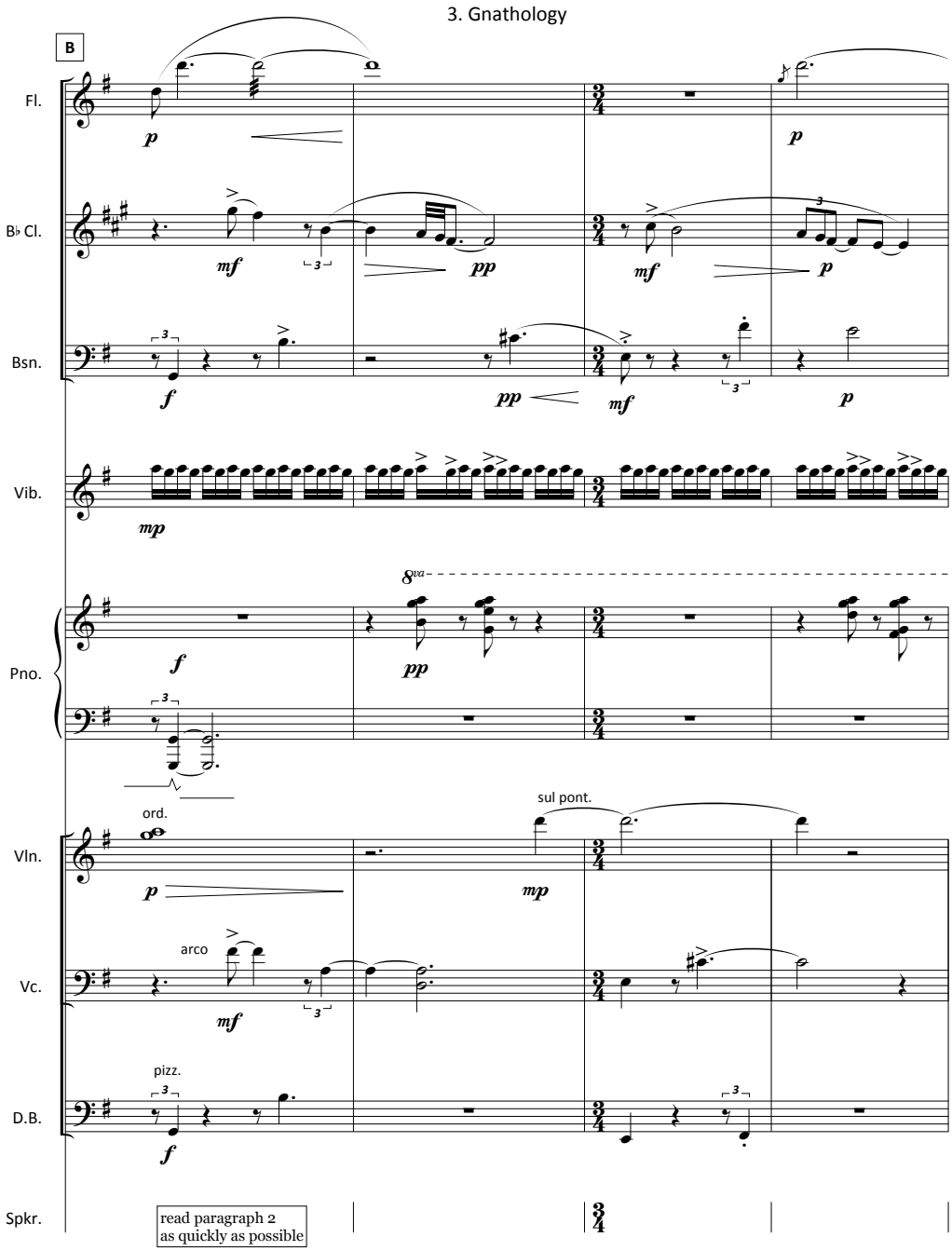
(Mastications I-IV; Deglutition)

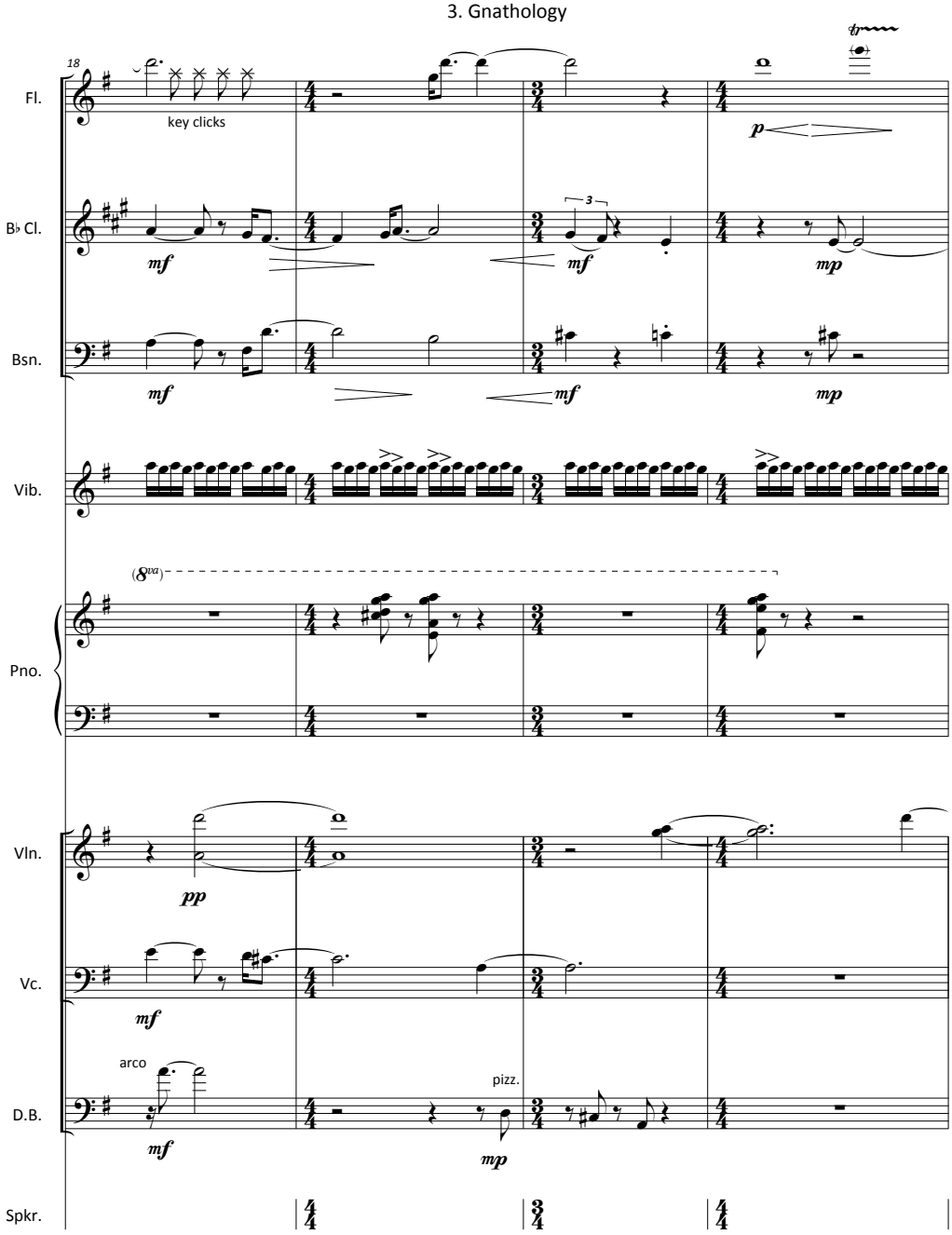


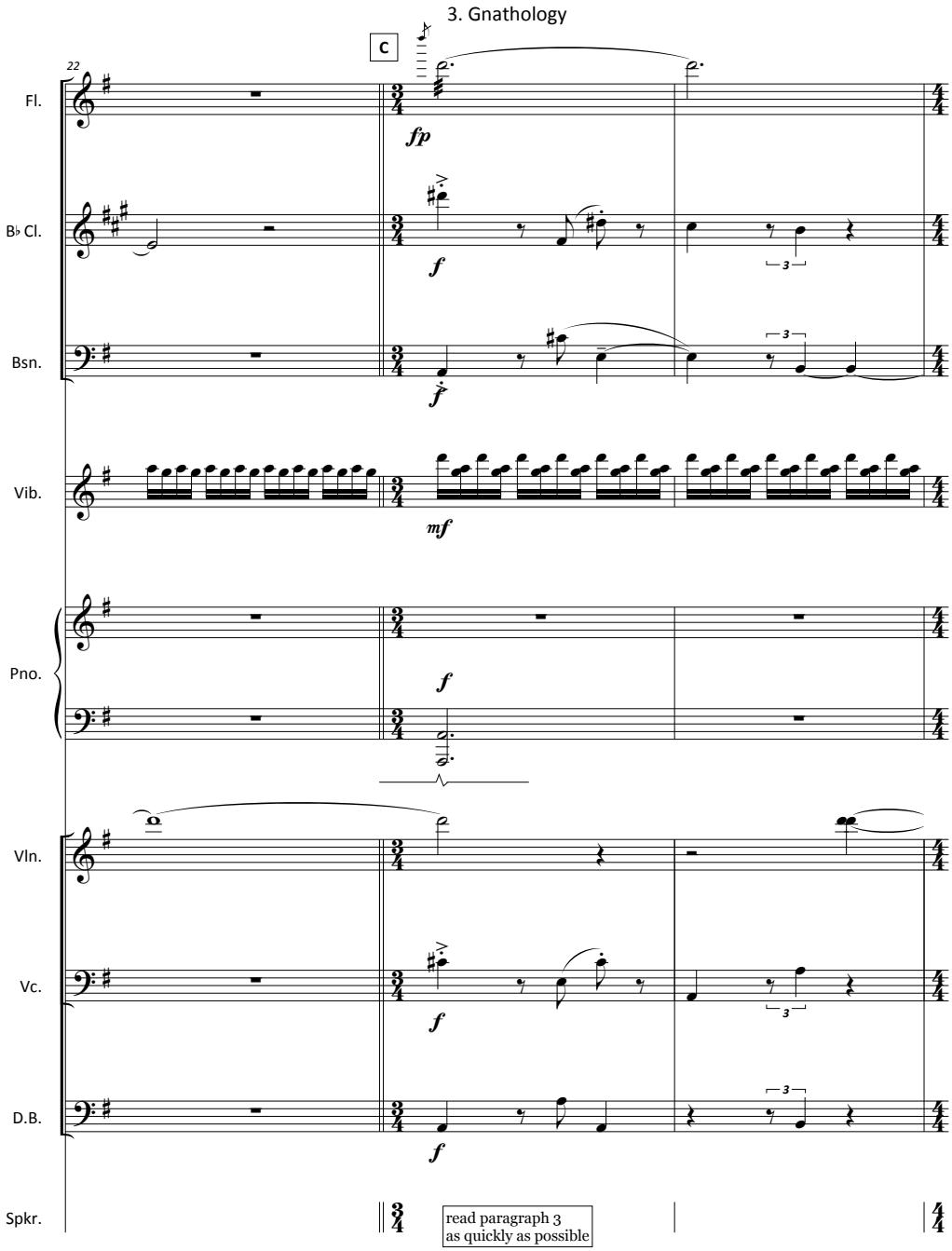
3. Gnathology

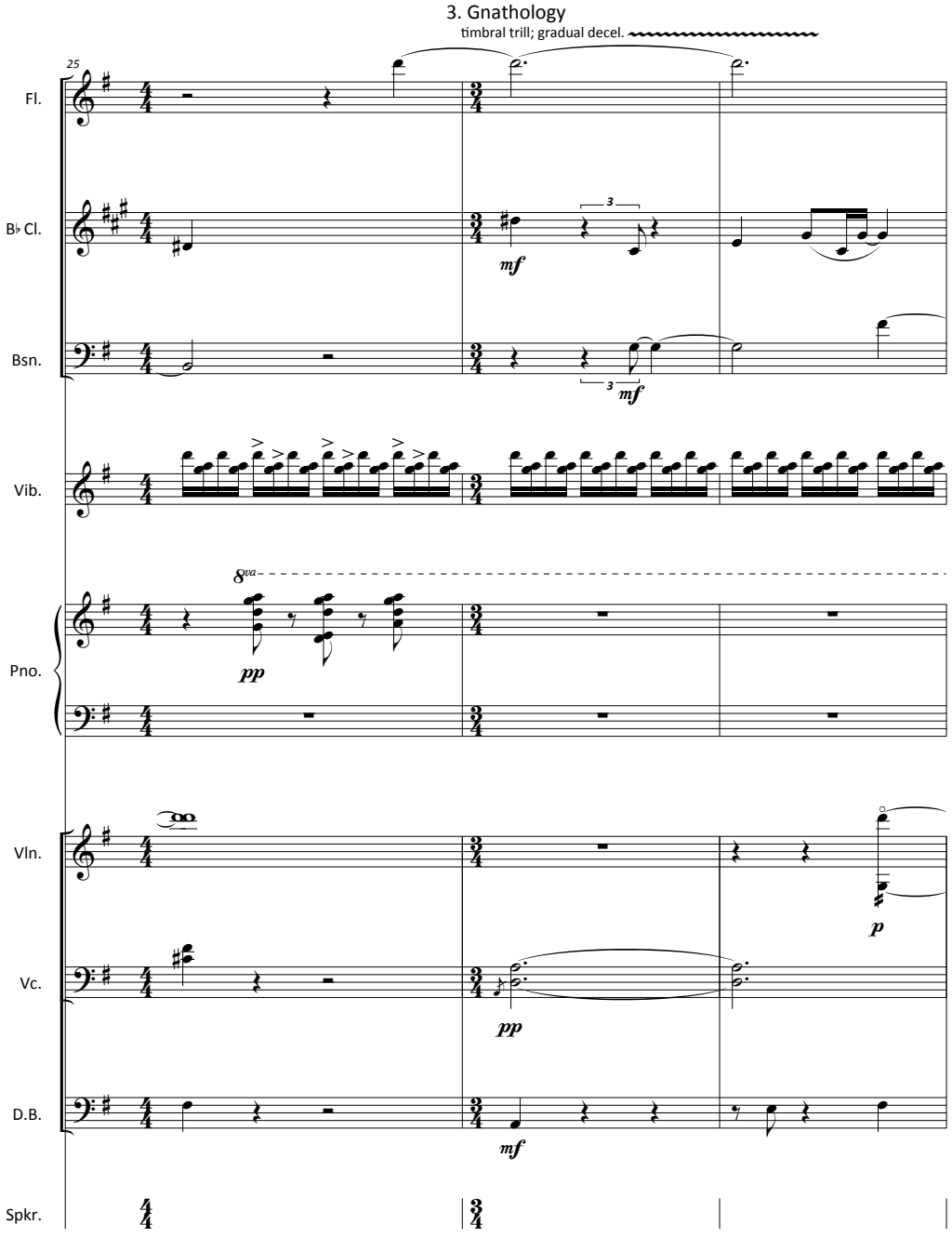



10
Fl.
pp
mp
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
p
mf
Vib.
(8va)
Pno.
Vln.
p
ord.
Vc.
mp
p
pizz.
arco
D.B.
mp
Spkr.

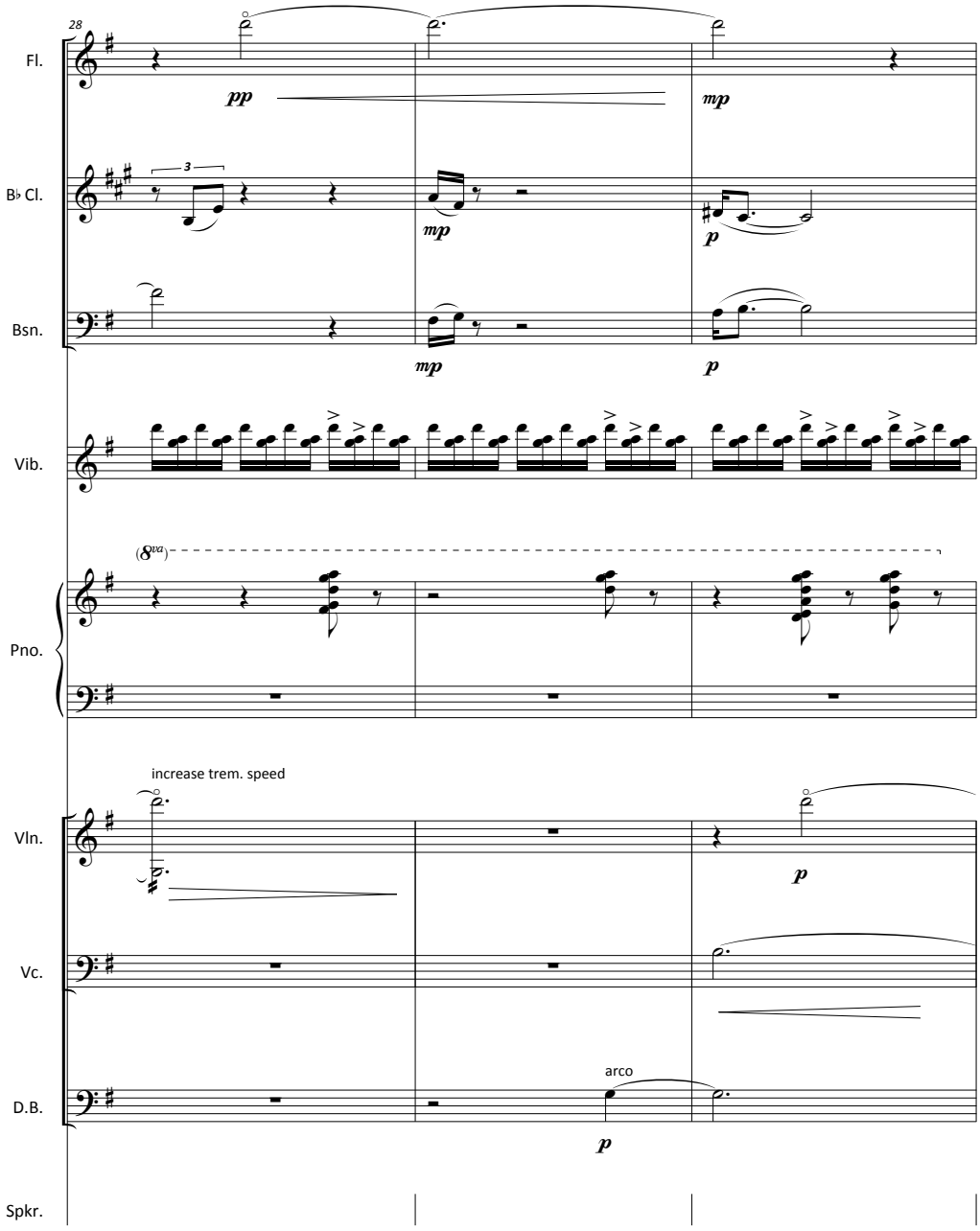

3. Gnathology
B
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
ord.
sul pont.
arco
pizz.
read paragraph 2
as quickly as possible

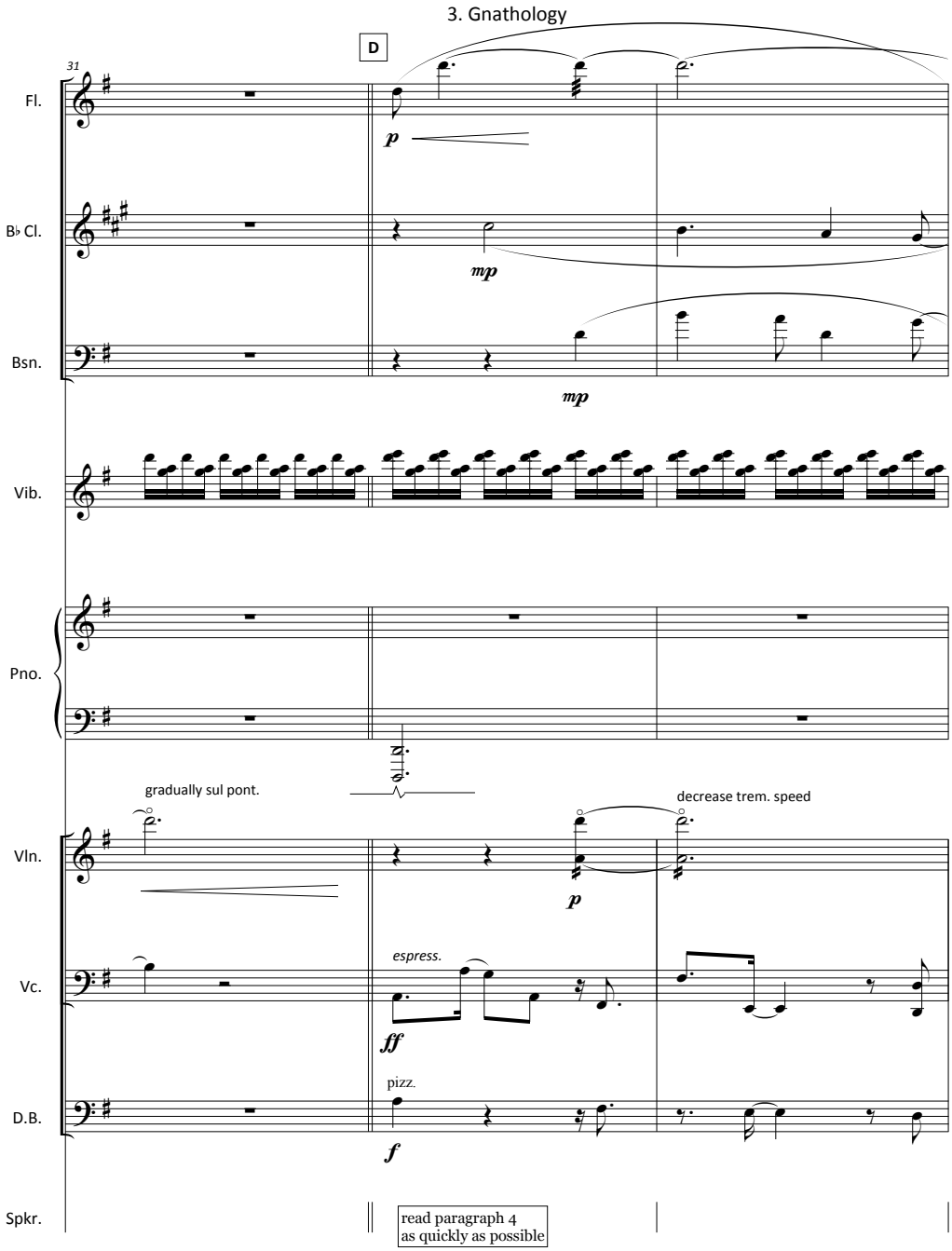

18
Fl.
key clicks
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
arco
pizz.
Spkr.

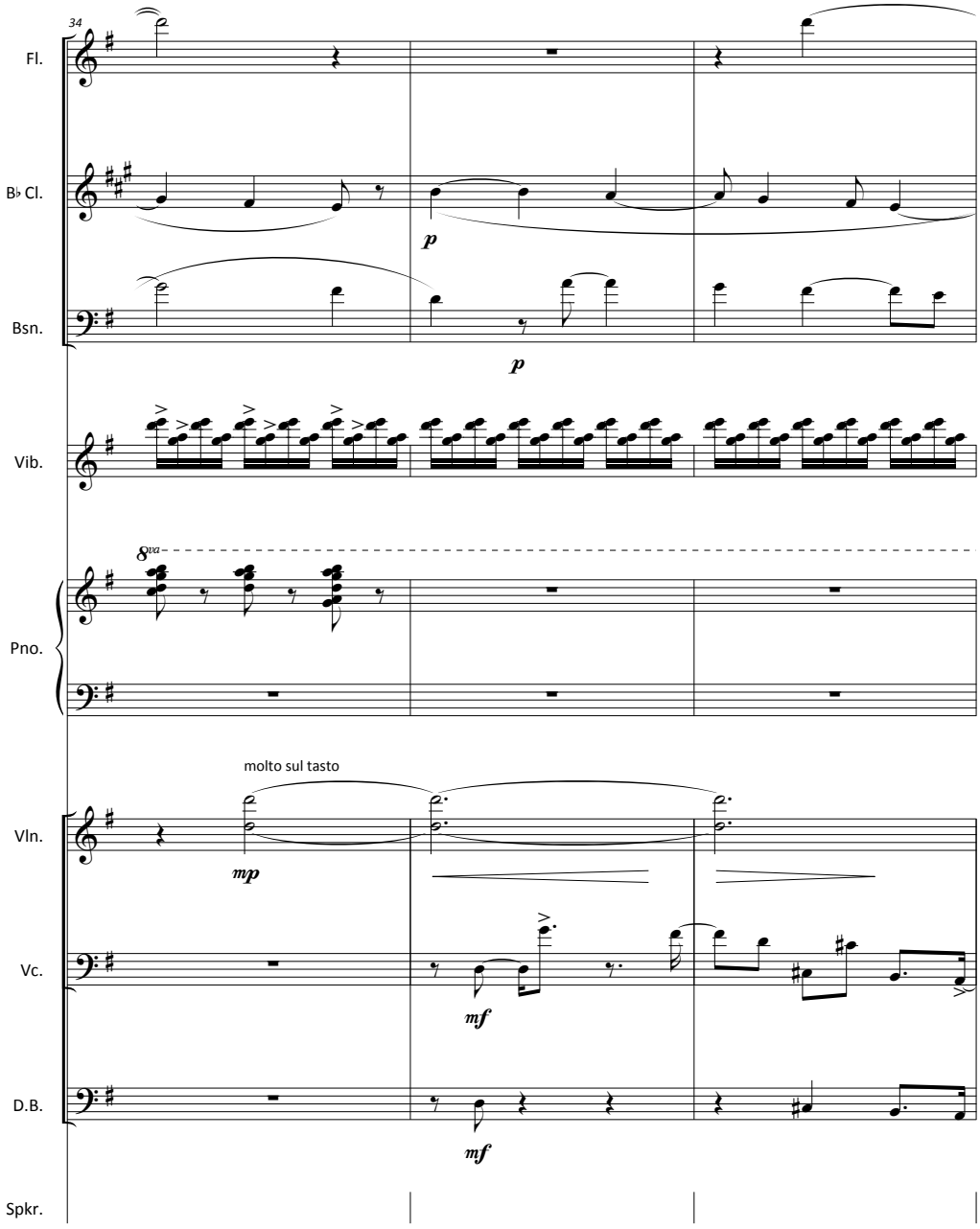

3. Gnathology
C
22
Fl.
fp
B♭ Cl.
f
Bsn.
f
Vib.
mf
Pno.
f
Vln.
Vc.
f
D.B.
f
Spkr.
read paragraph 3
as quickly as possible

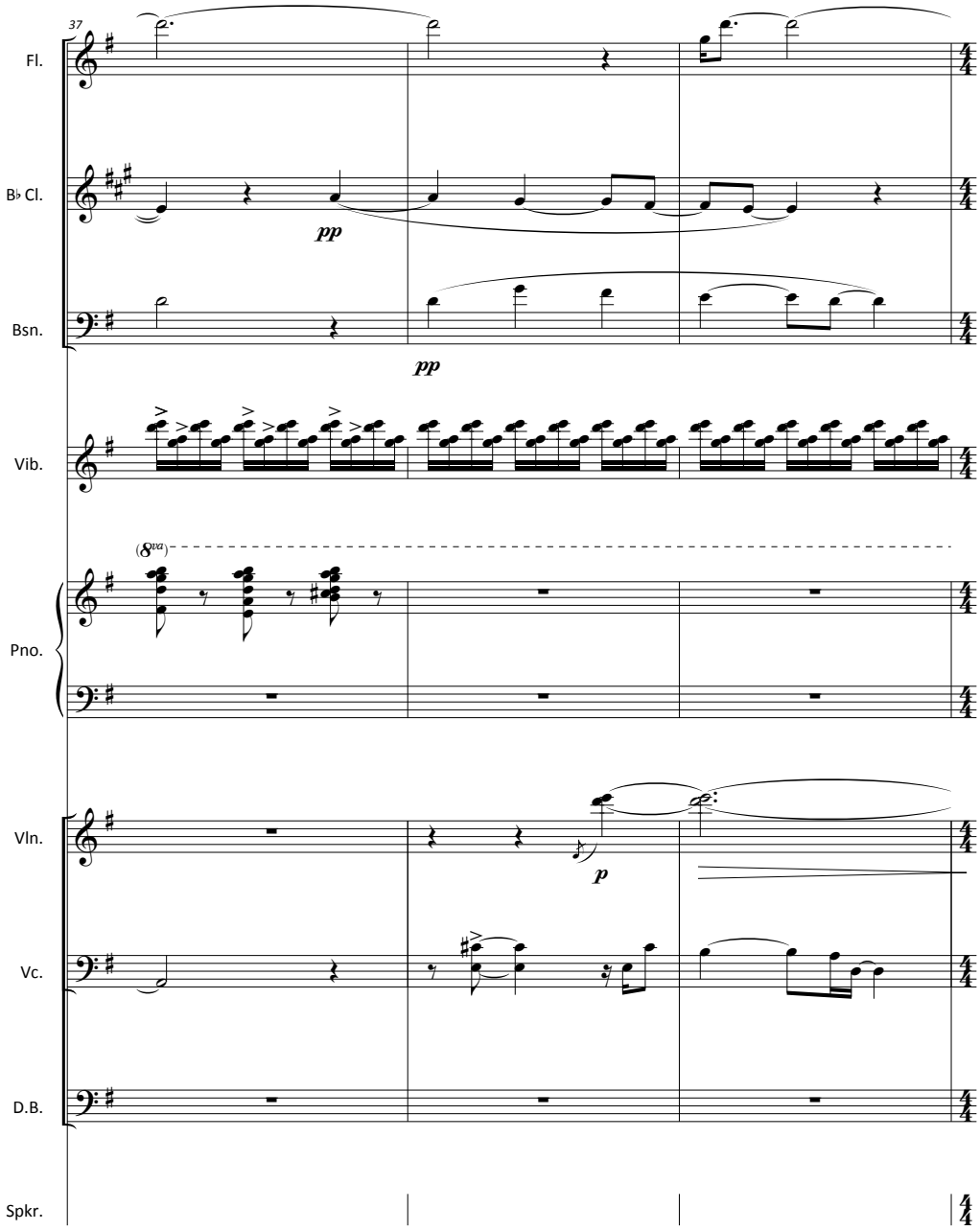

3. Gnathology
timbral trill; gradual decel.
25
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
mf
pp
p

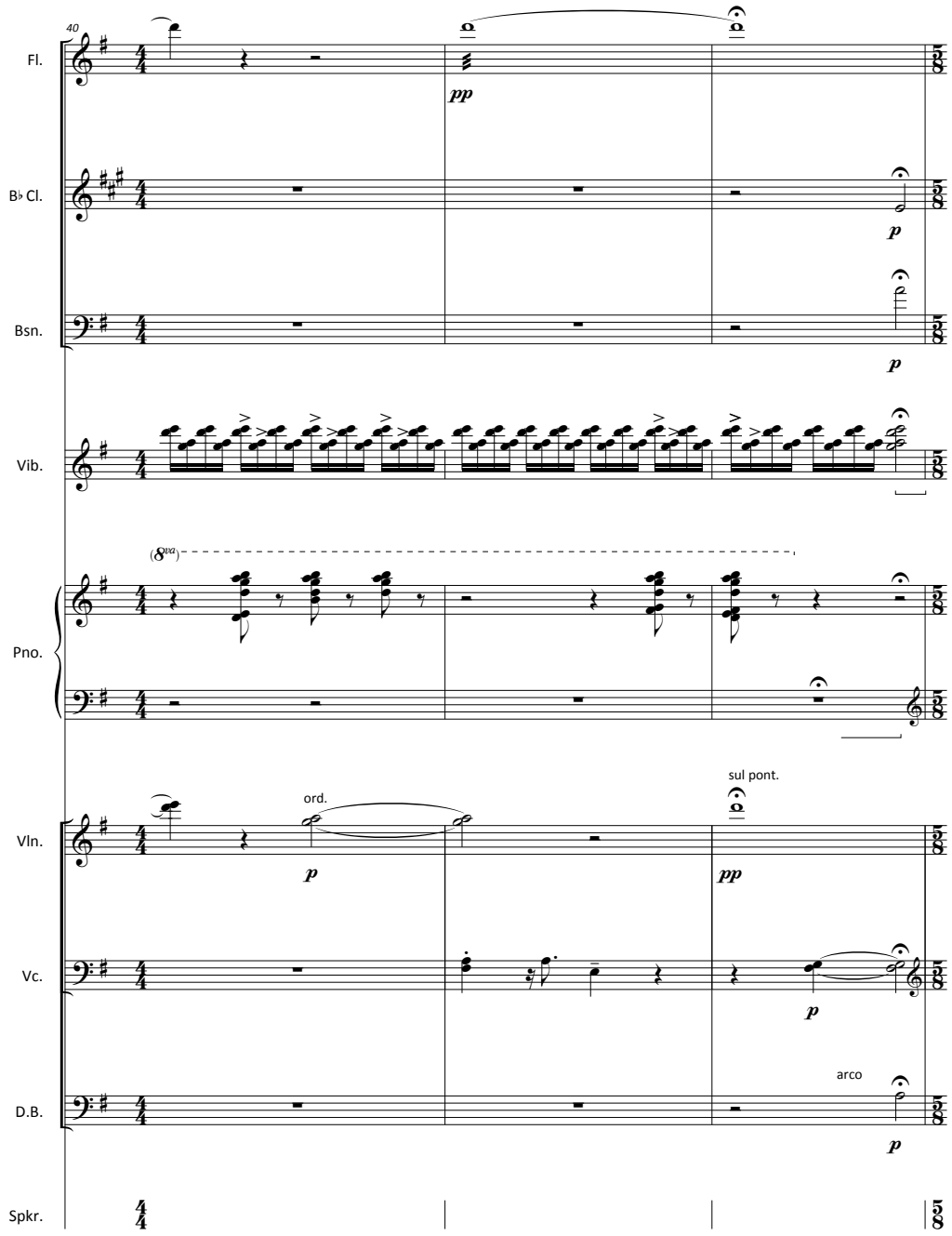
3. Gnathology

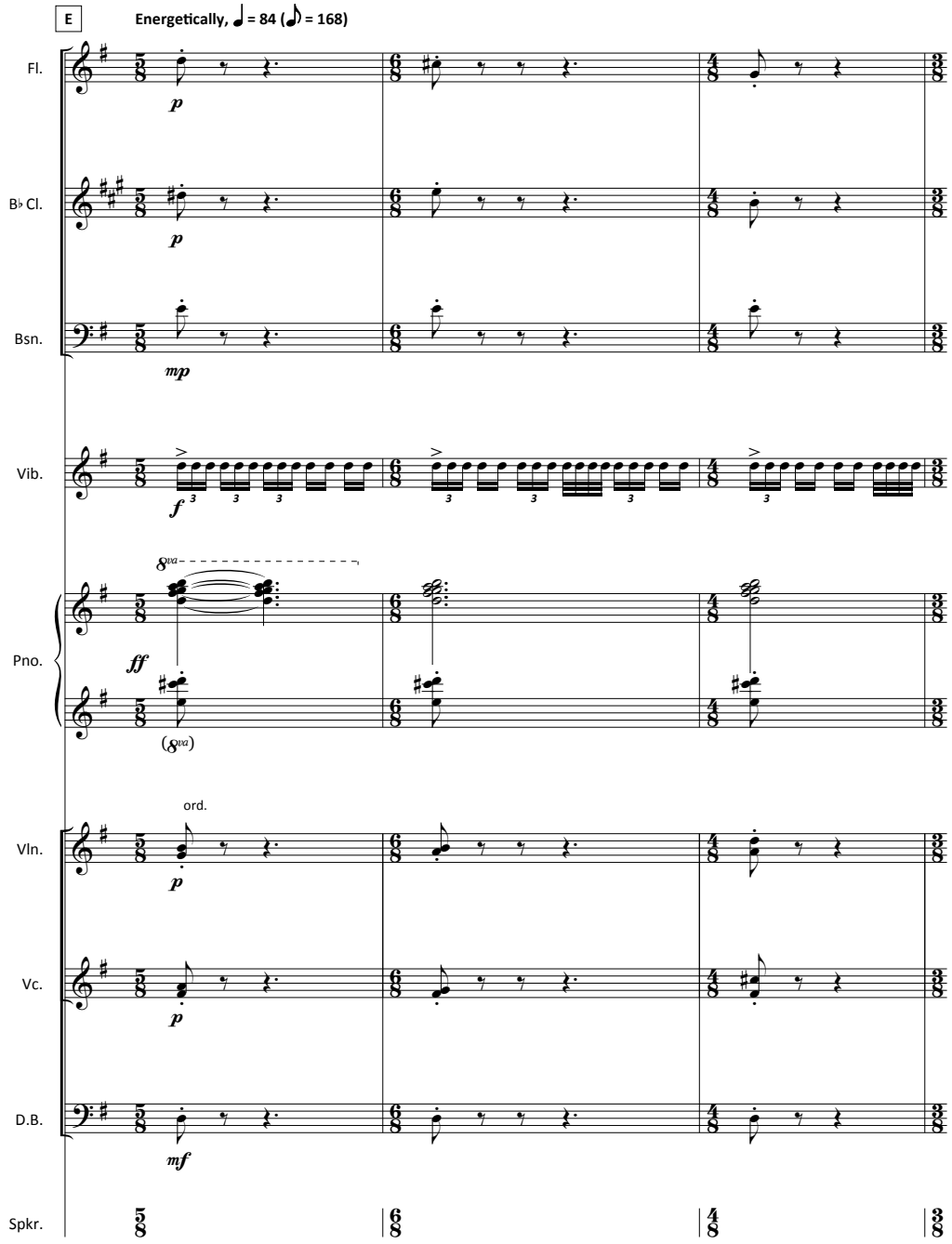


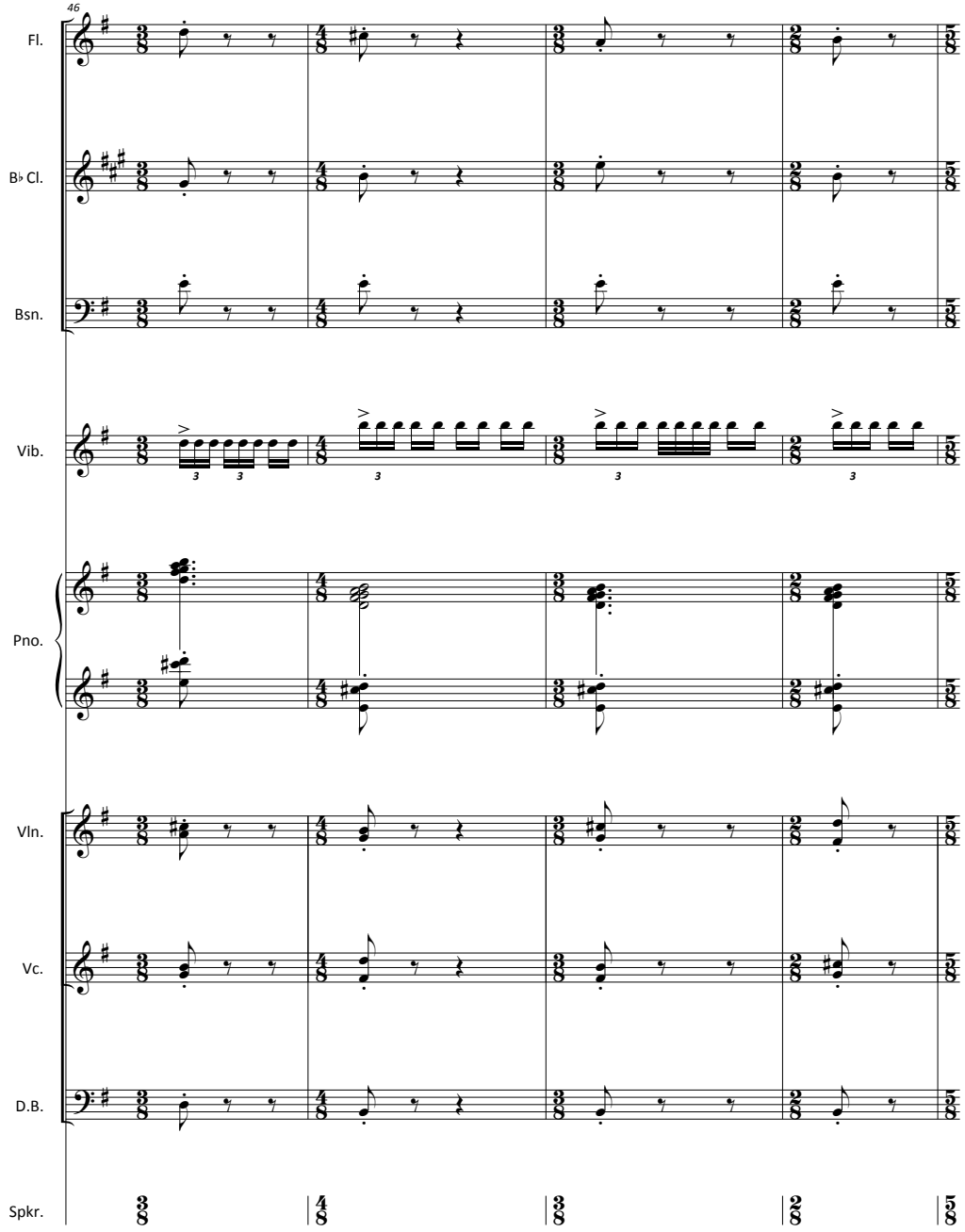

3. Gnathology
D
31
Fl.
p
B♭ Cl.
mp
Bsn.
mp
Vib.
Pno.
gradually sul pont.
decrease trem. speed
Vln.
p
Vc.
espress.
ff
D.B.
pizz.
f
Spkr.
read paragraph 4
as quickly as possible

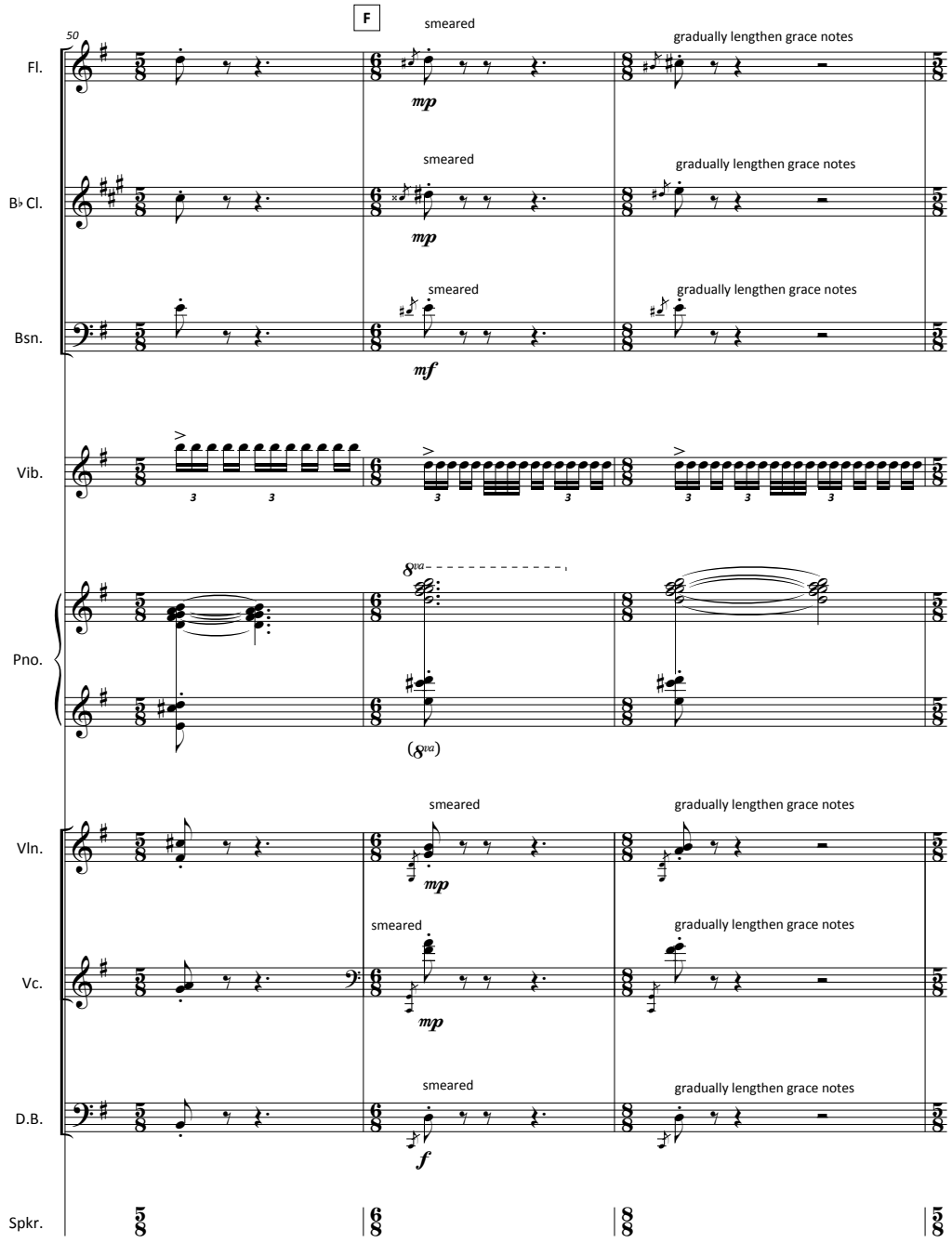

34
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
molto sul tasto
8va
p
mp
mf

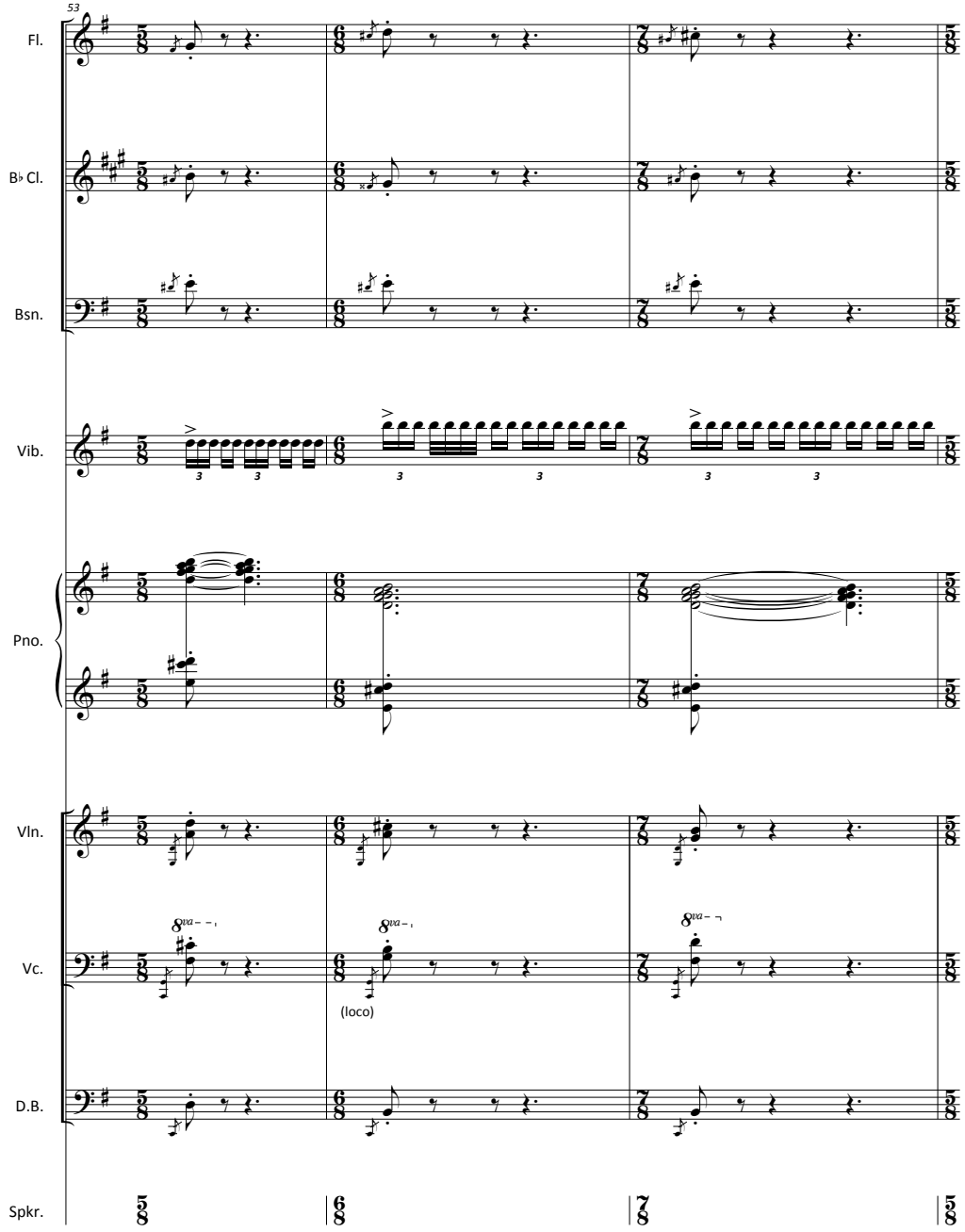

37
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
pp
pp
(8va)
p

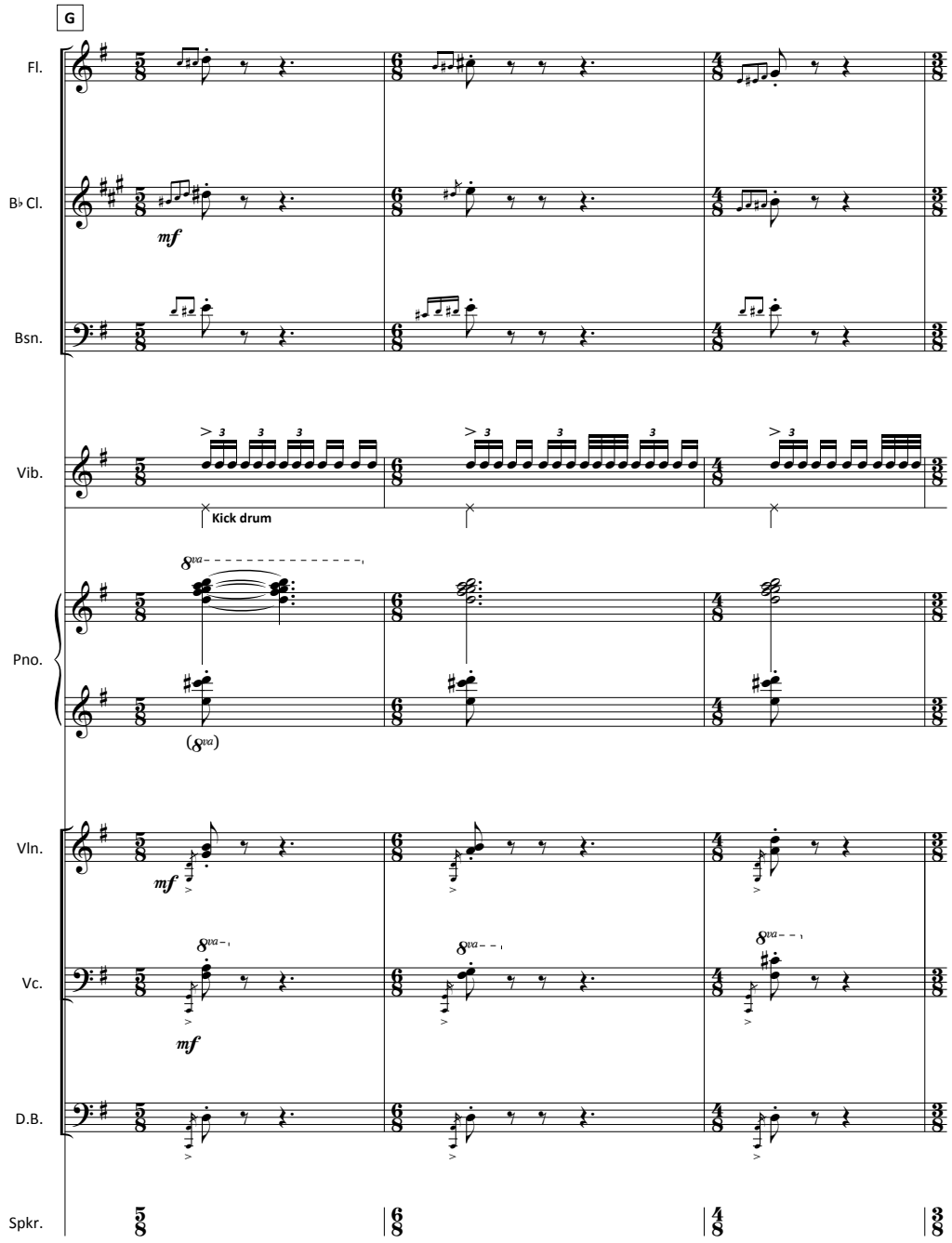

40
Fl.
pp
B♭ Cl.
p
Bsn.
p
Vib.
(8va)
Pno.
ord.
sul pont.
Vln.
p
pp
Vc.
p
arco
D.B.
p
Spkr.

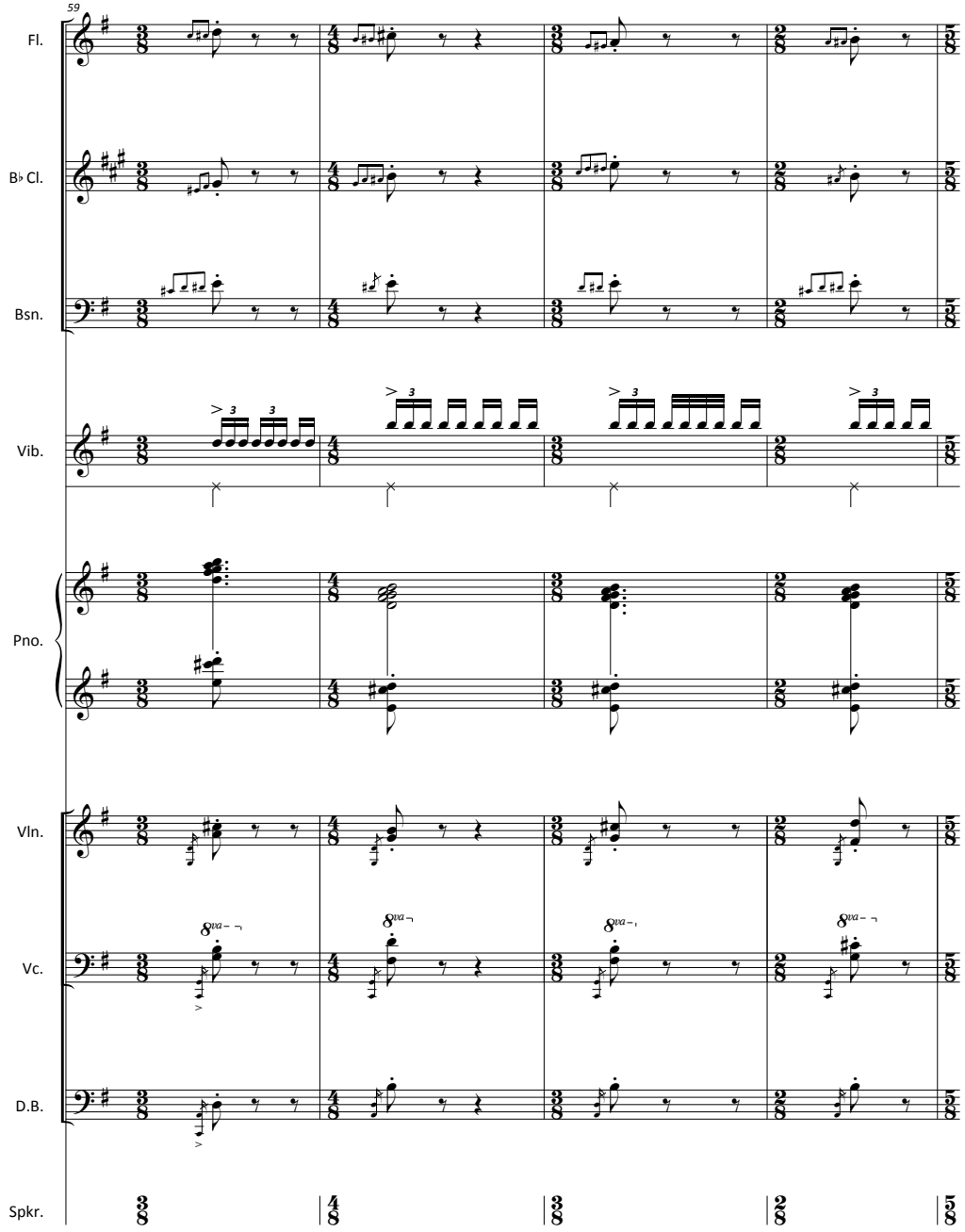

E
Energetically, ♩ = 84 (♪ = 168)
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
ord.

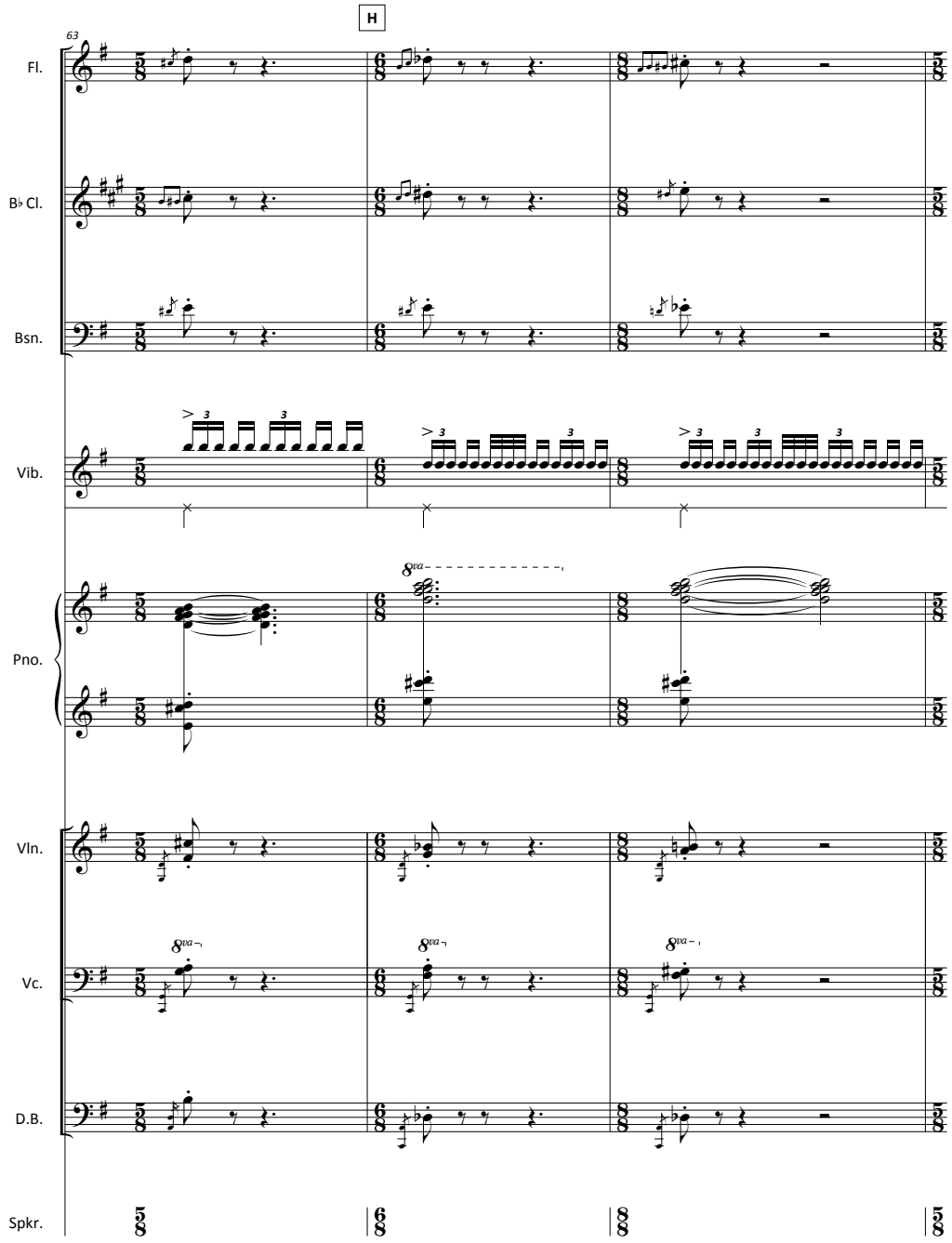

46
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

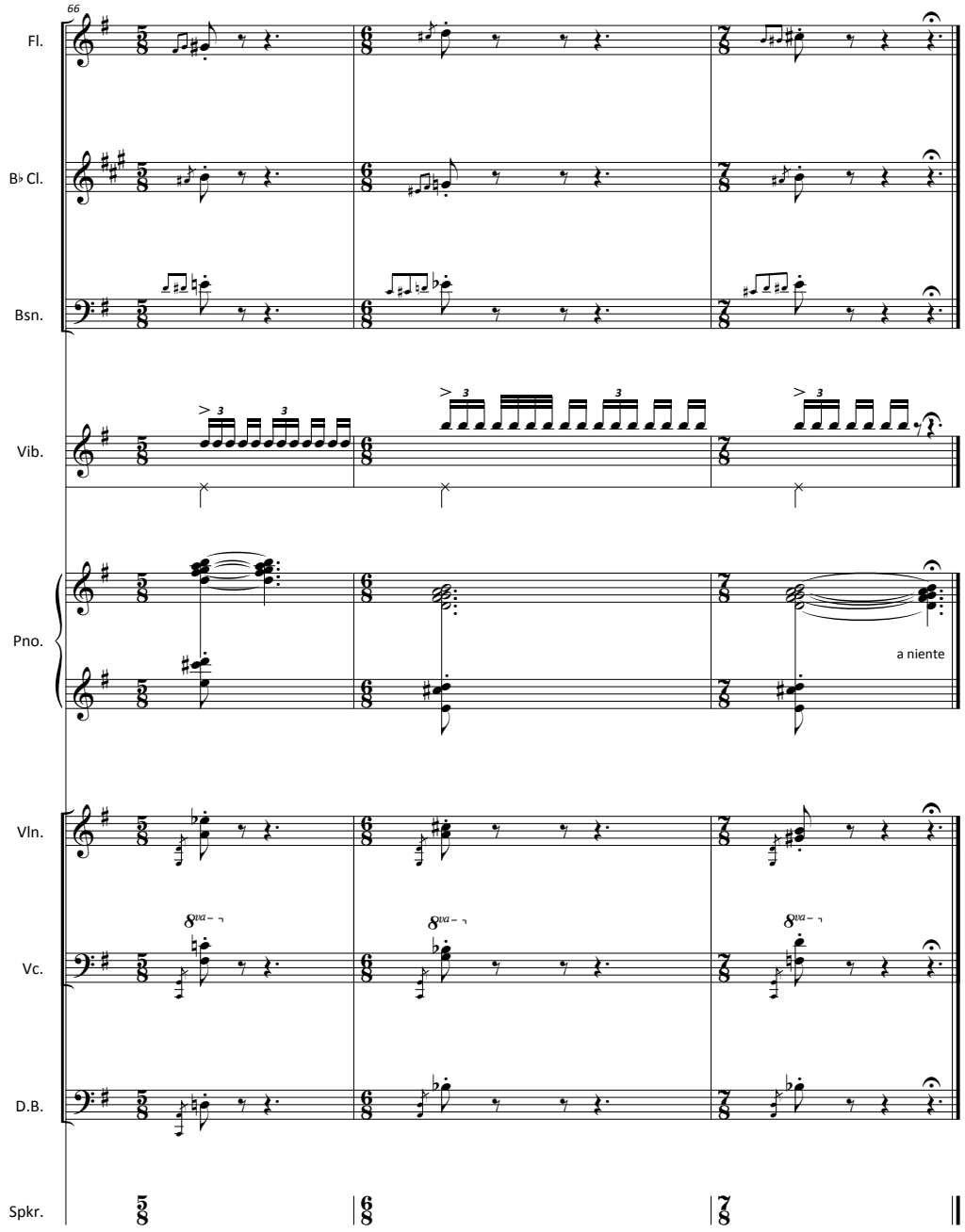

50
F
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
smeared
gradually lengthen grace notes
mp
mf
f
8va
(8va)


53
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
8va
(loco)

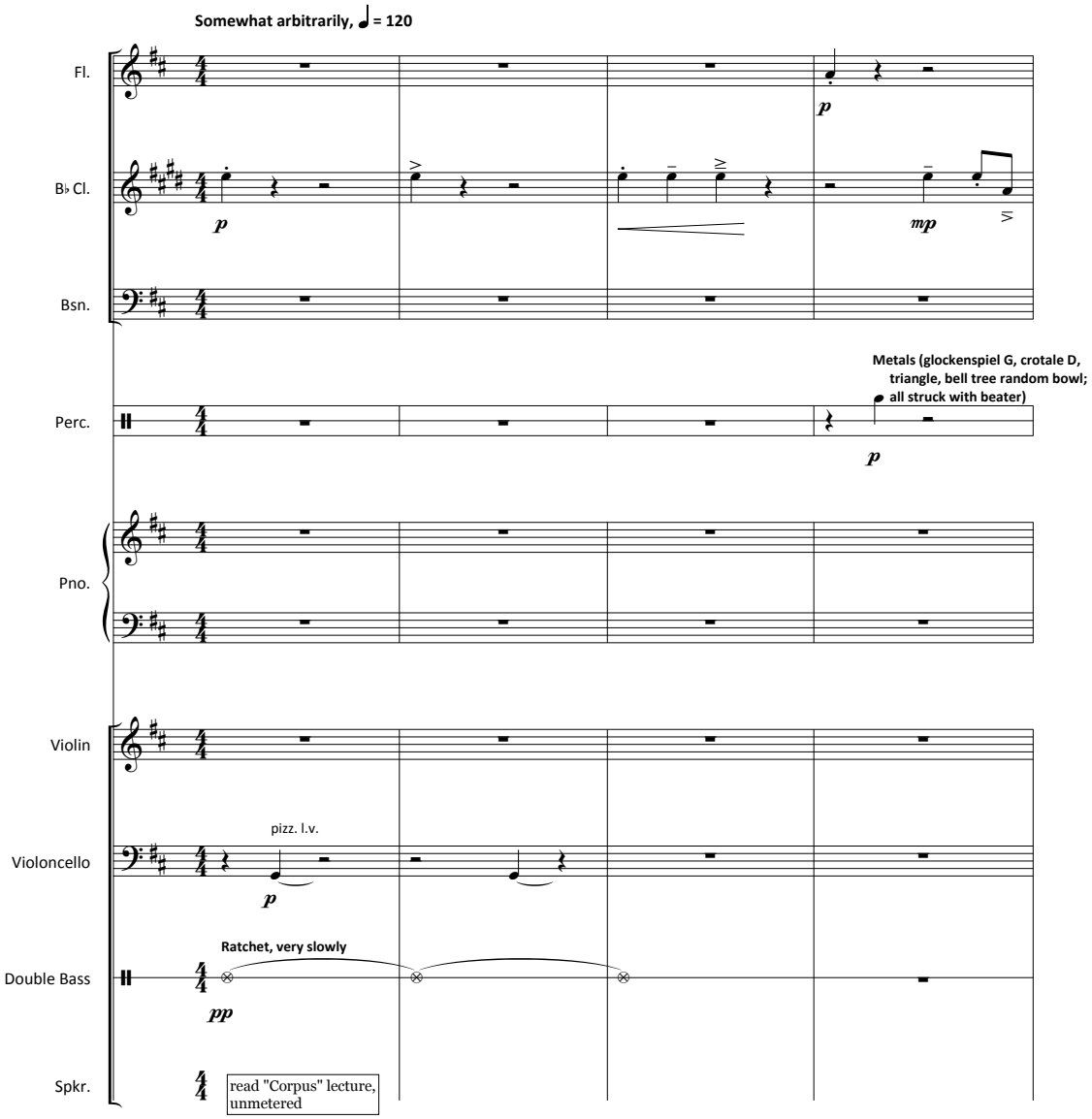

G
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
mf
Bsn.
Vib.
Kick drum
Pno.
8va
(8va)
Vln.
mf
Vc.
mf
D.B.
Spkr.

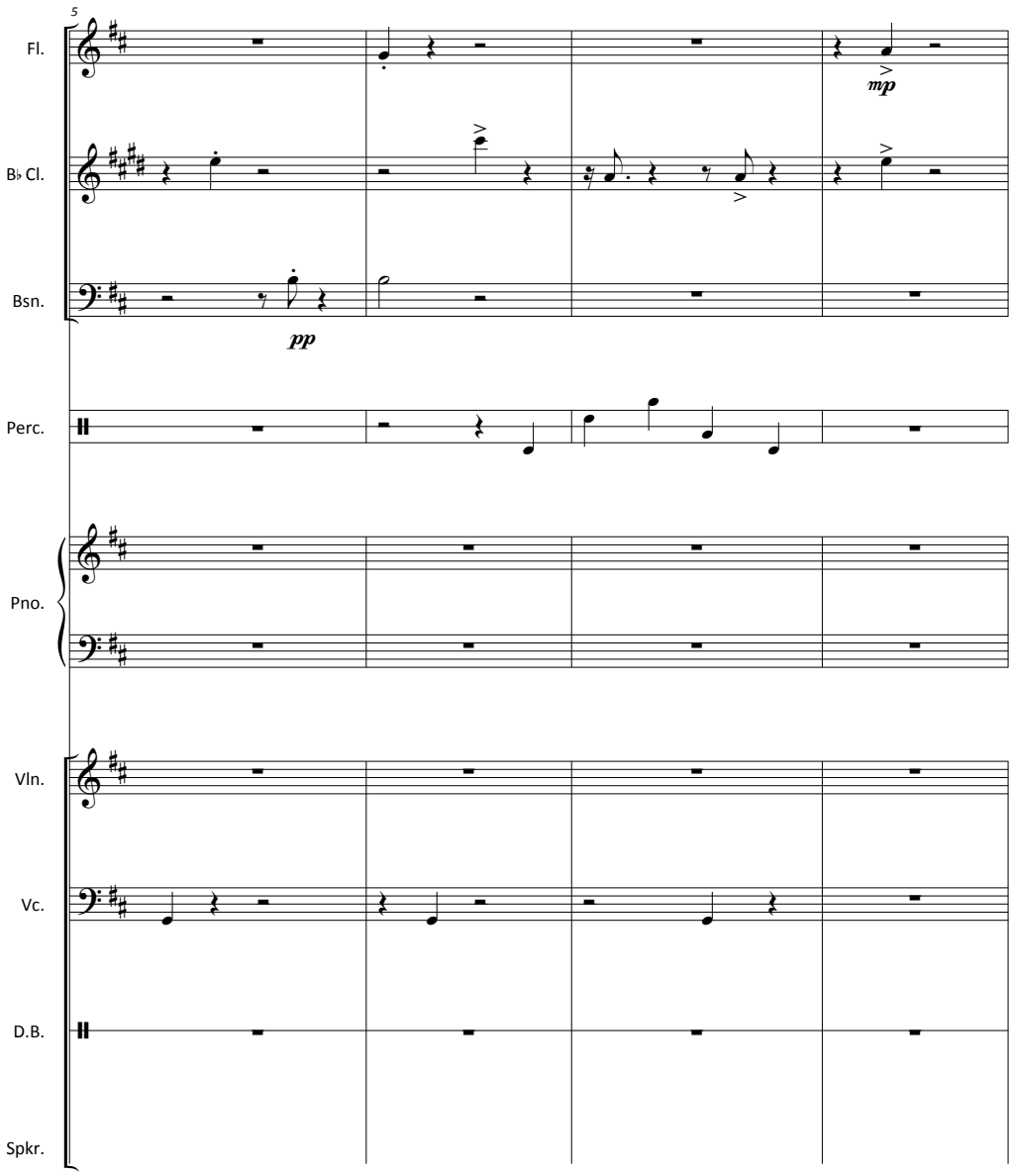

59
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

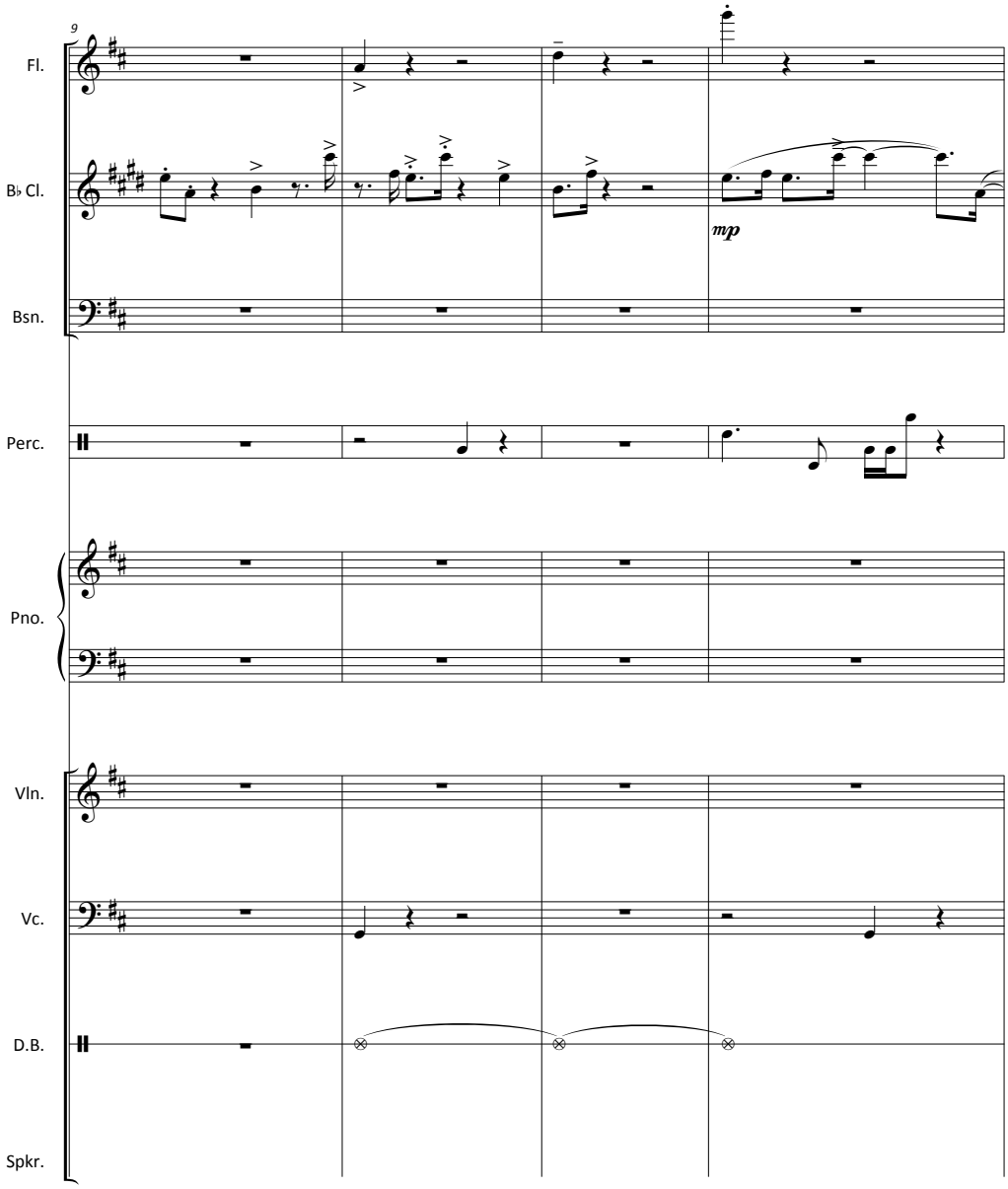

H
63
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

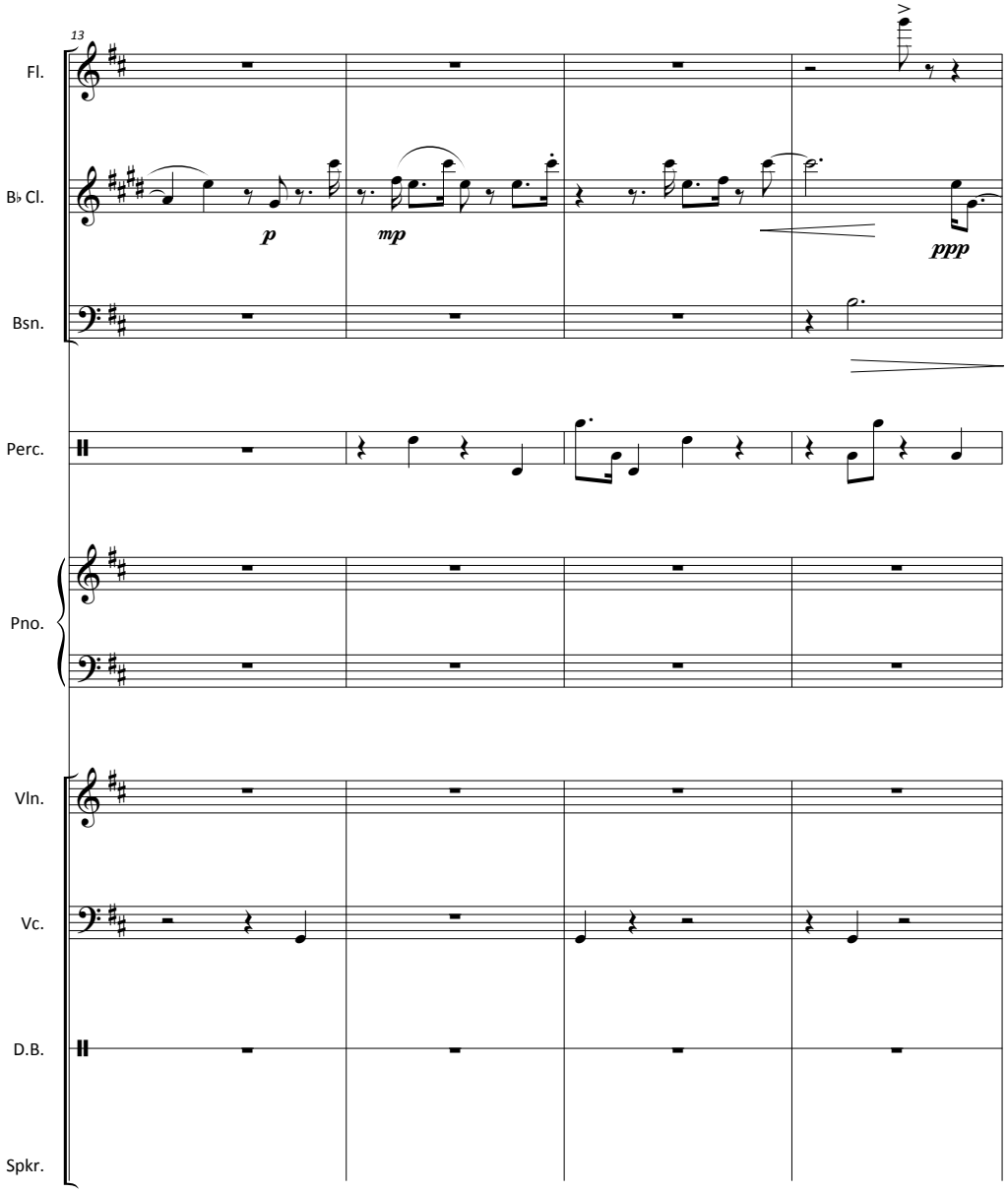

66
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
a niente
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

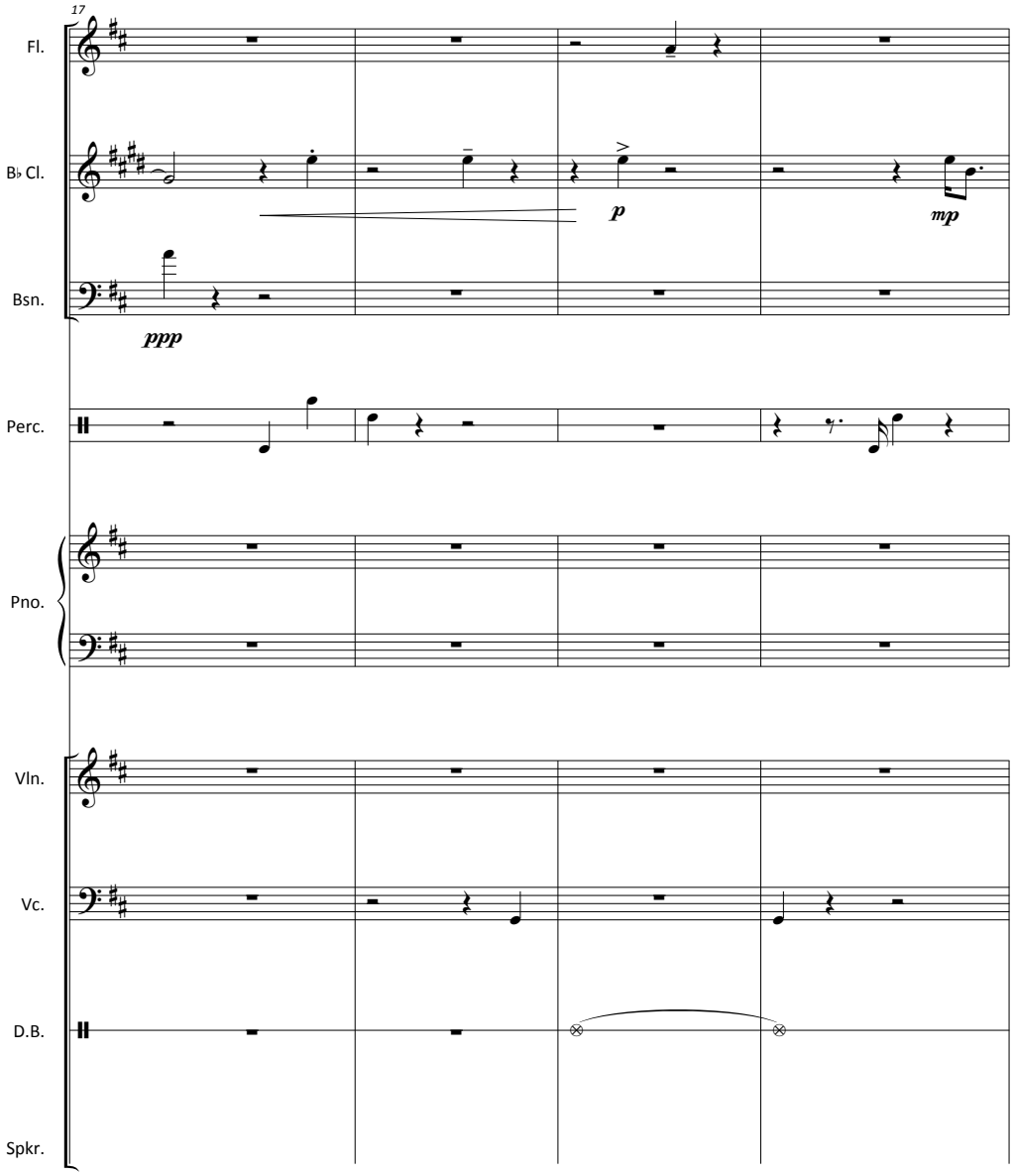
4. Corpus


Somewhat arbitrarily, ♩ = 120
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Metals (glockenspiel G, crotale D, triangle, bell tree random bowl; all struck with beater)
Pno.
Violin
Violoncello
pizz. l.v.
Double Bass
Ratchet, very slowly
Spkr.
read "Corpus" lecture, unmetered

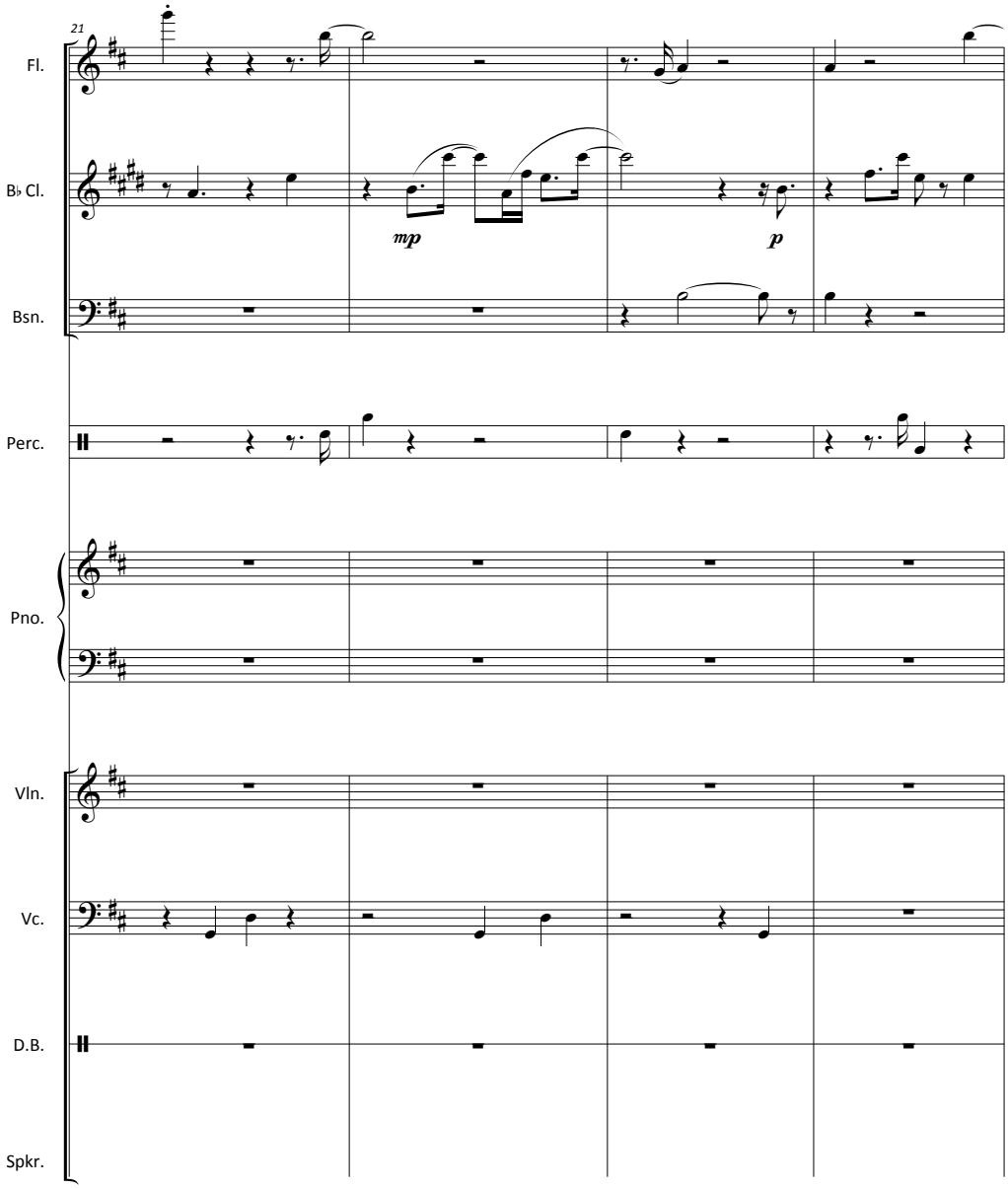

5
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mp
pp
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

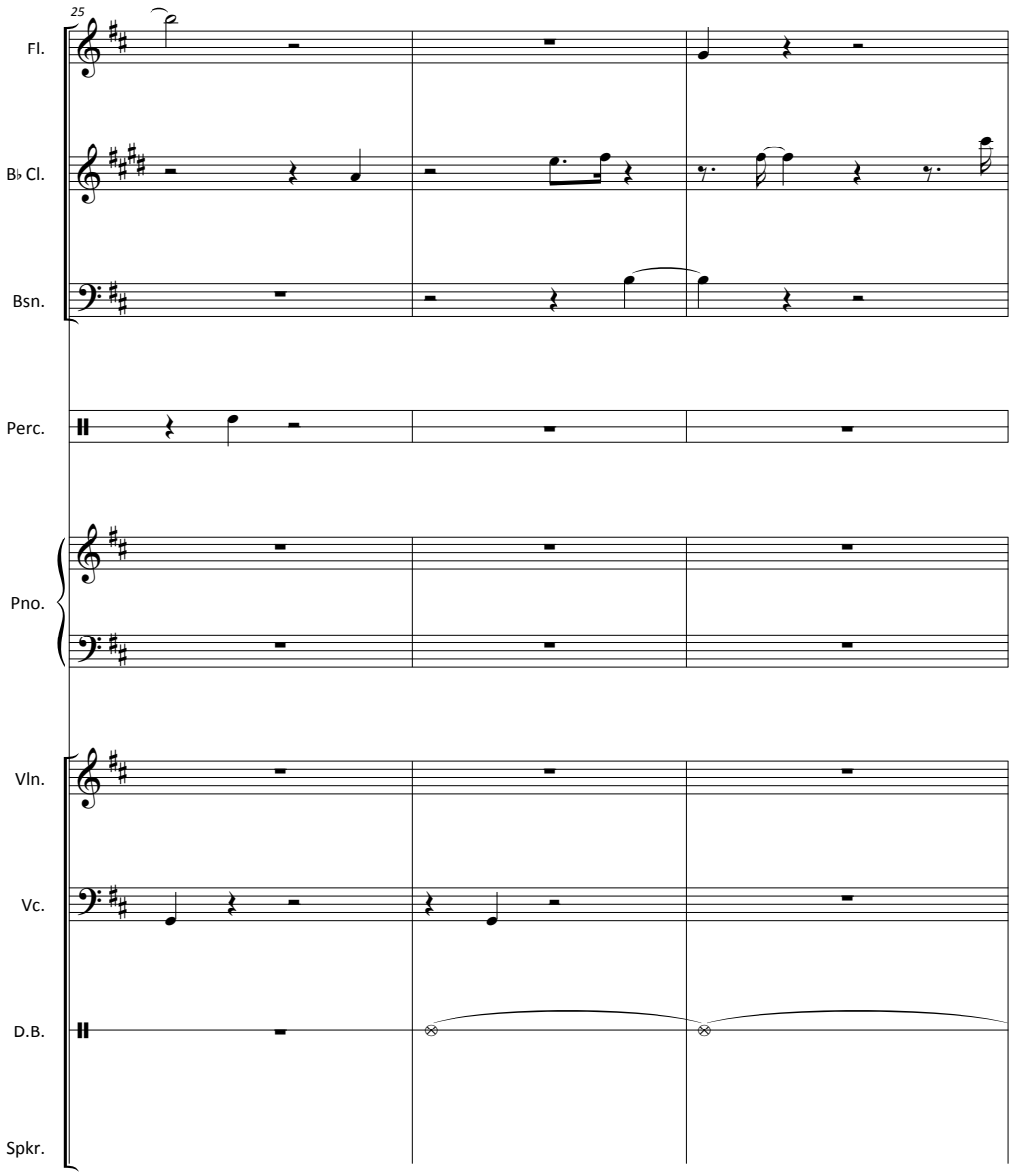

9
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
mp
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

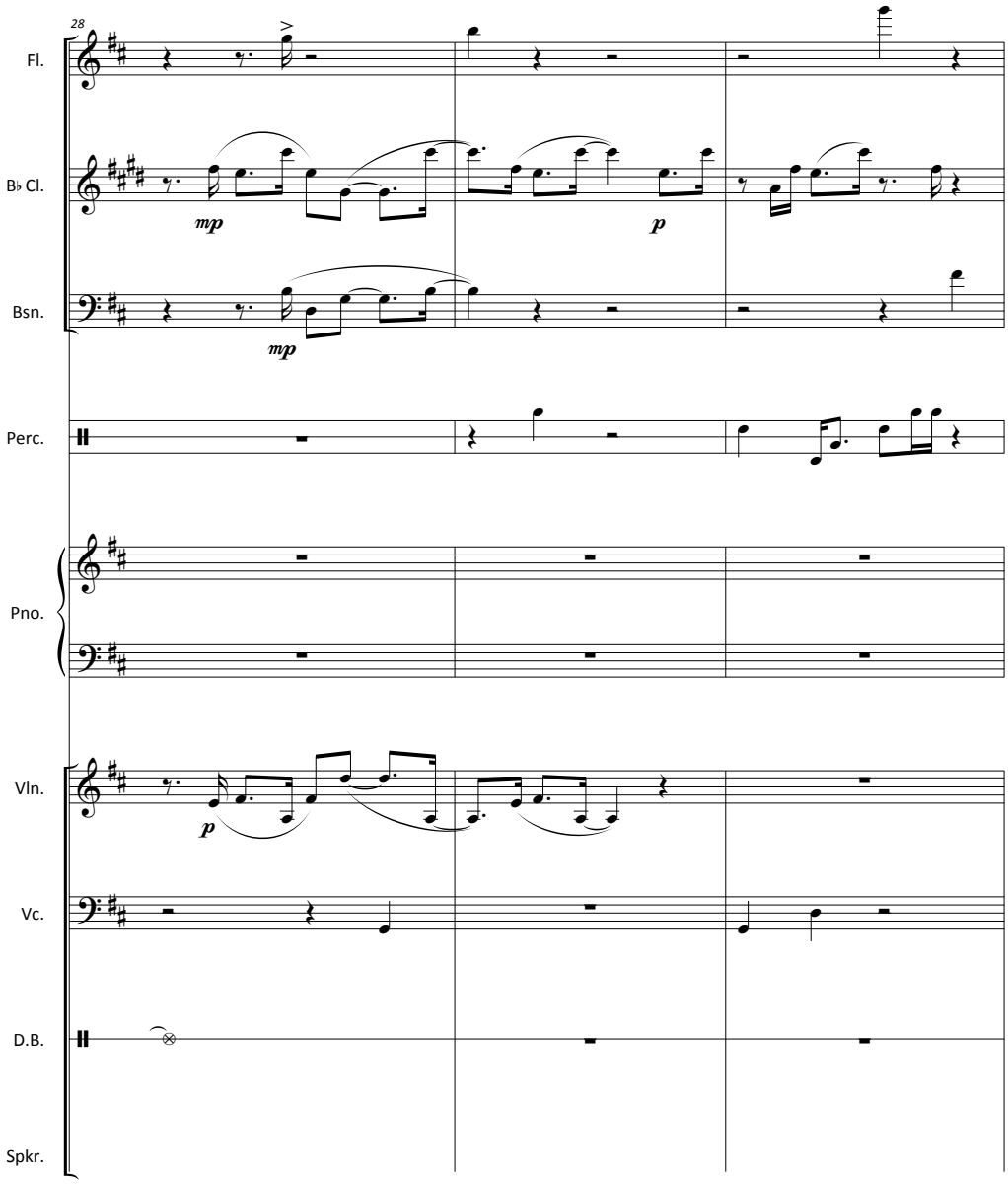

13
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p
mp
ppp

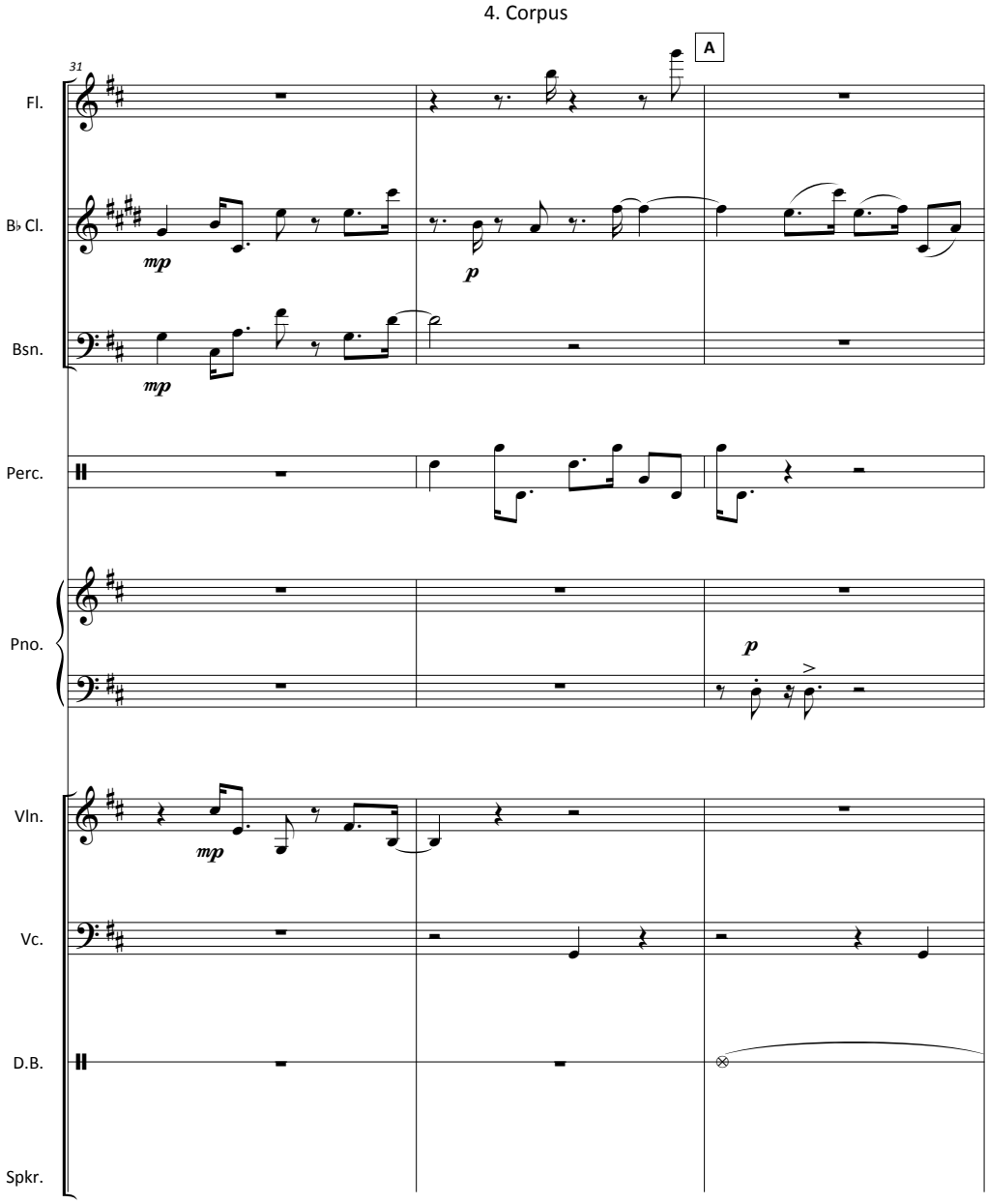

17
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
ppp
p
mp

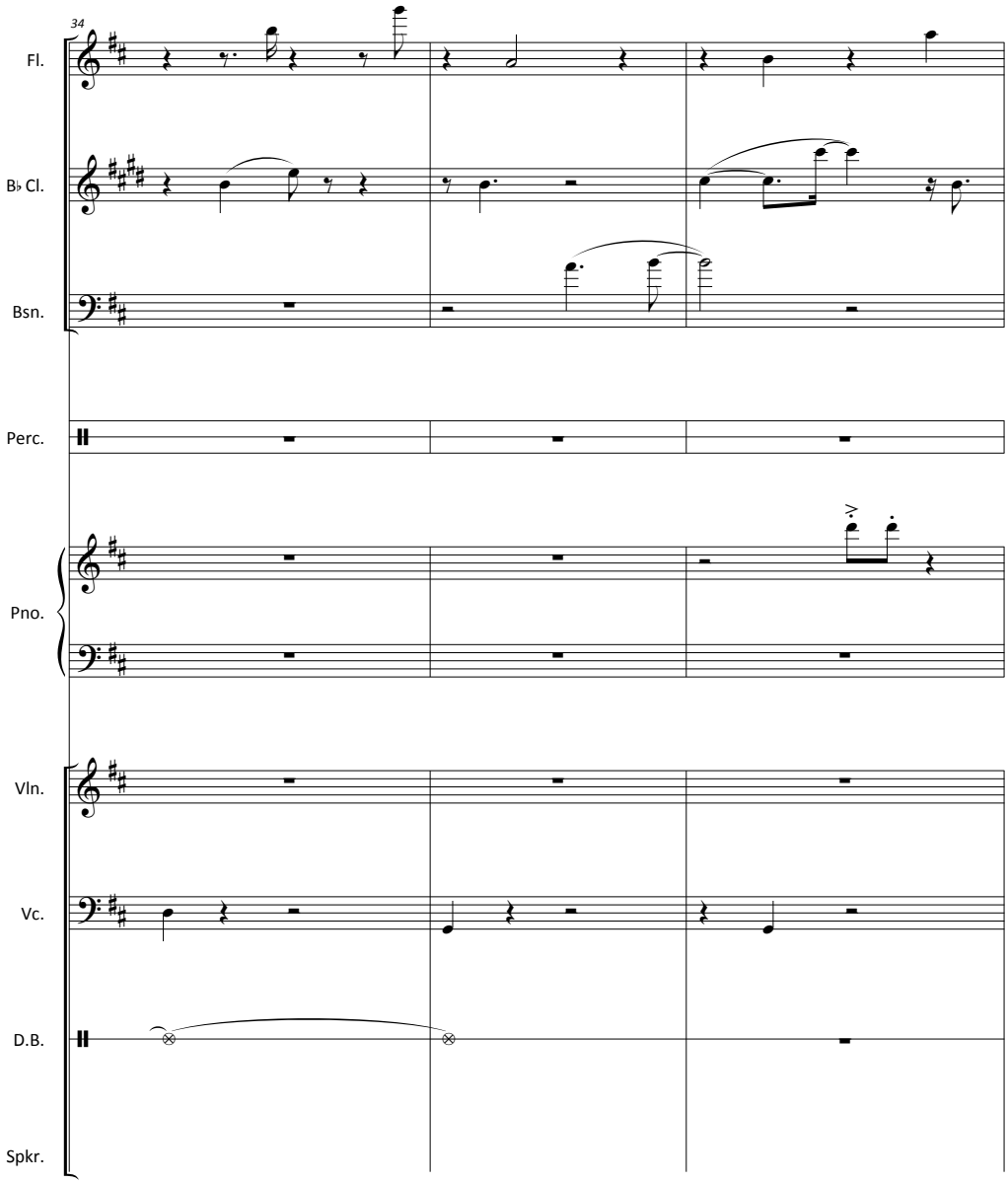
4. Corpus

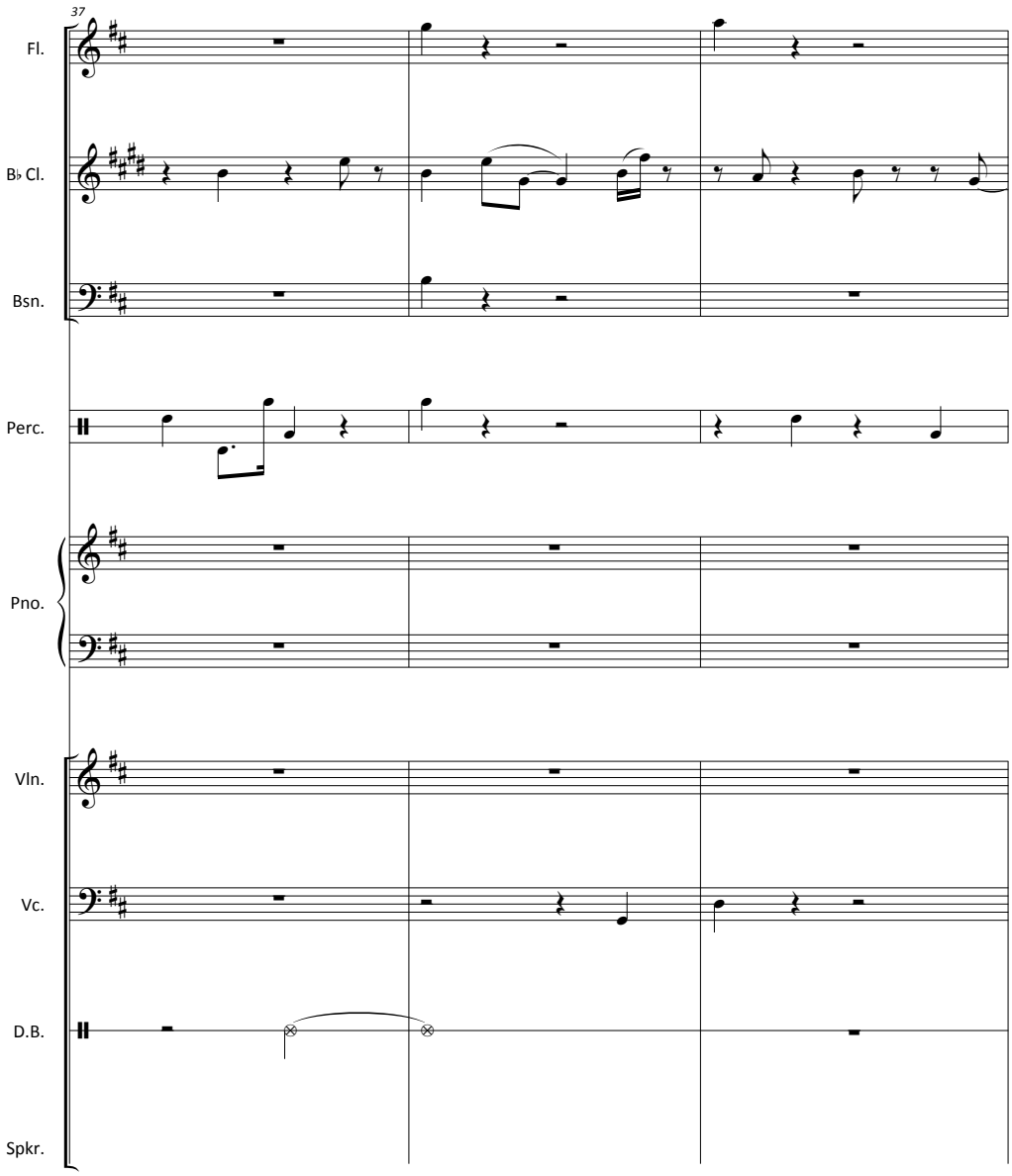


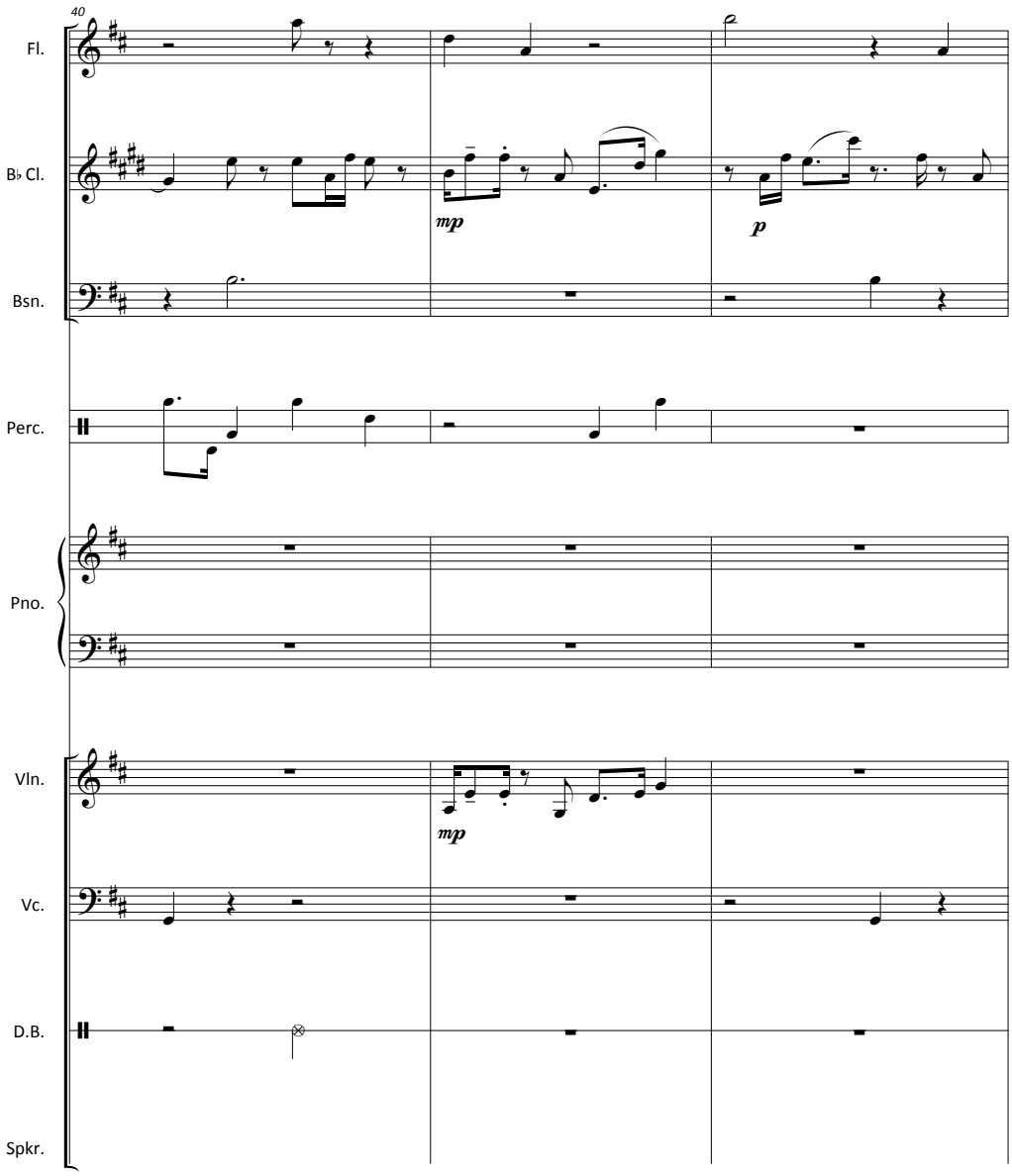

25
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

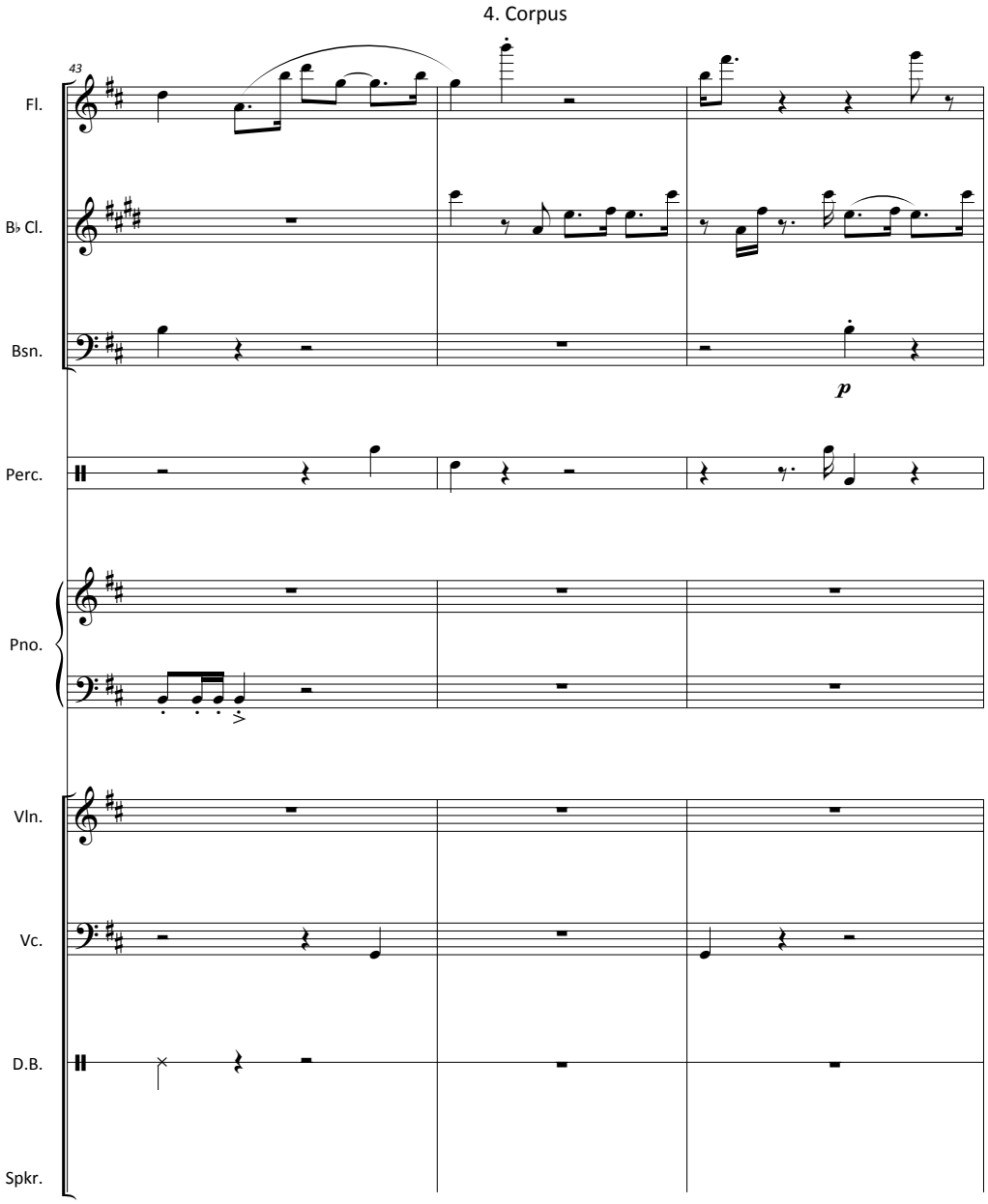

28
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
mp
p
mp
p

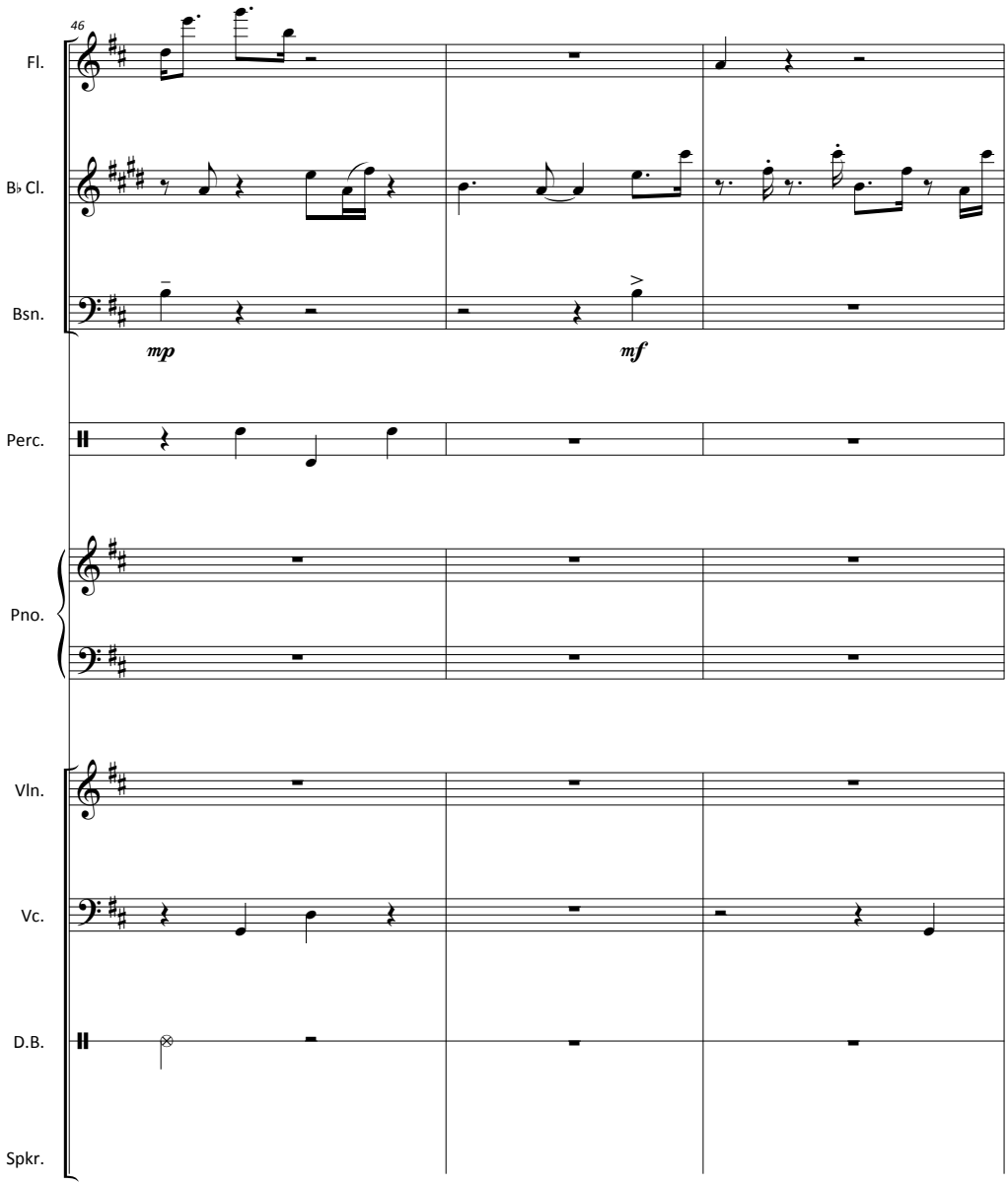

4. Corpus
31
A
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
mp
p
mp
p
mp

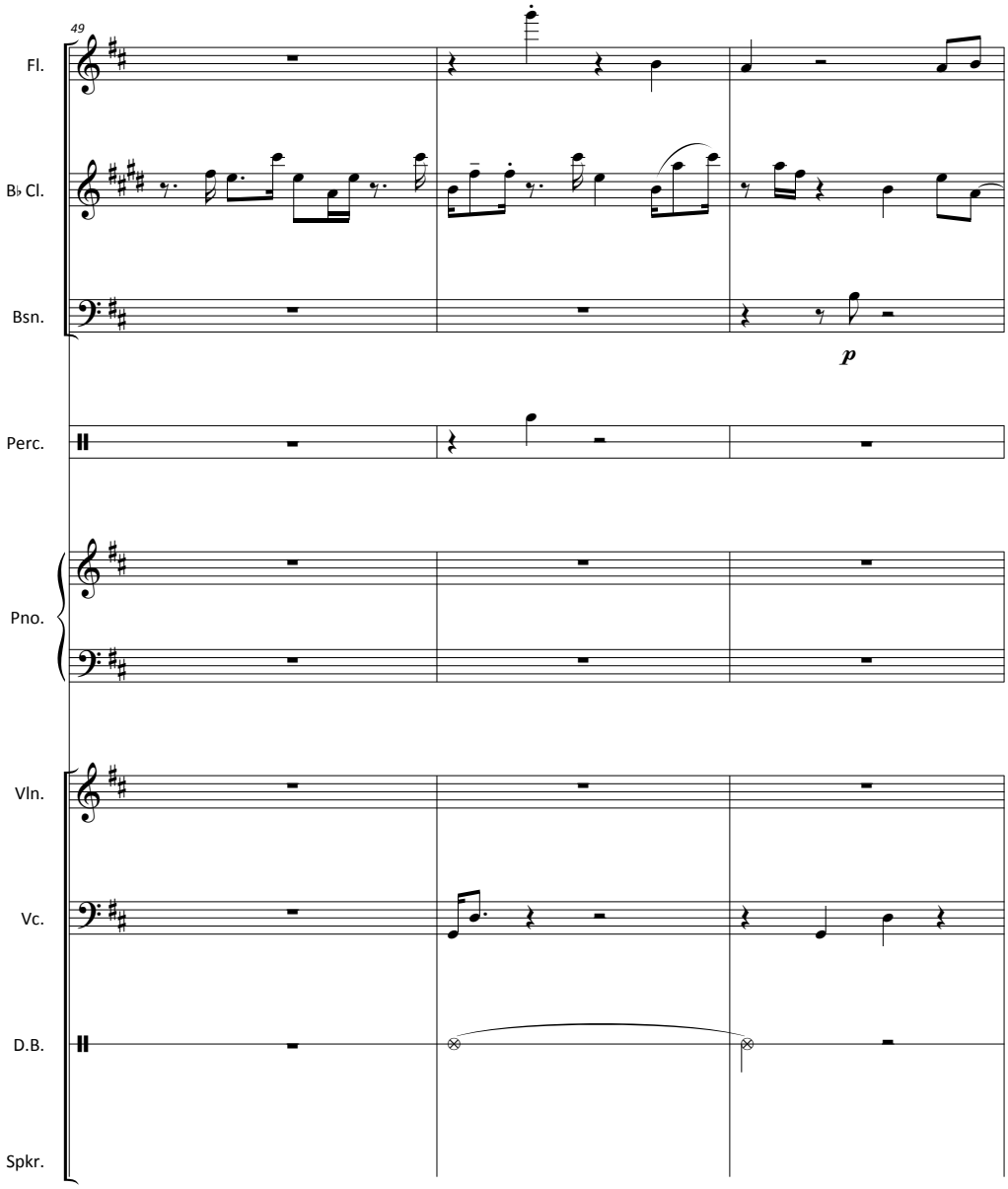

34
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

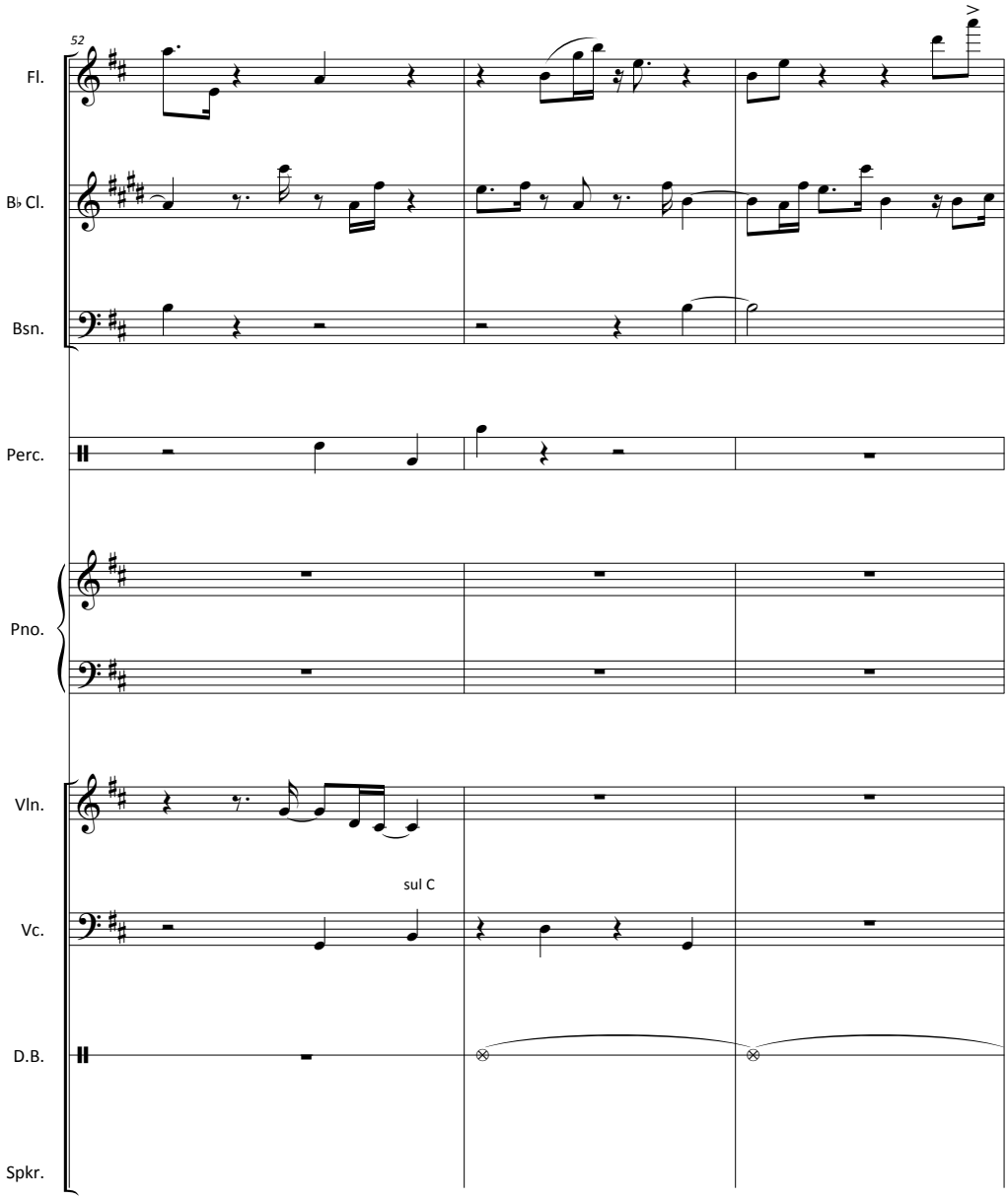

37
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

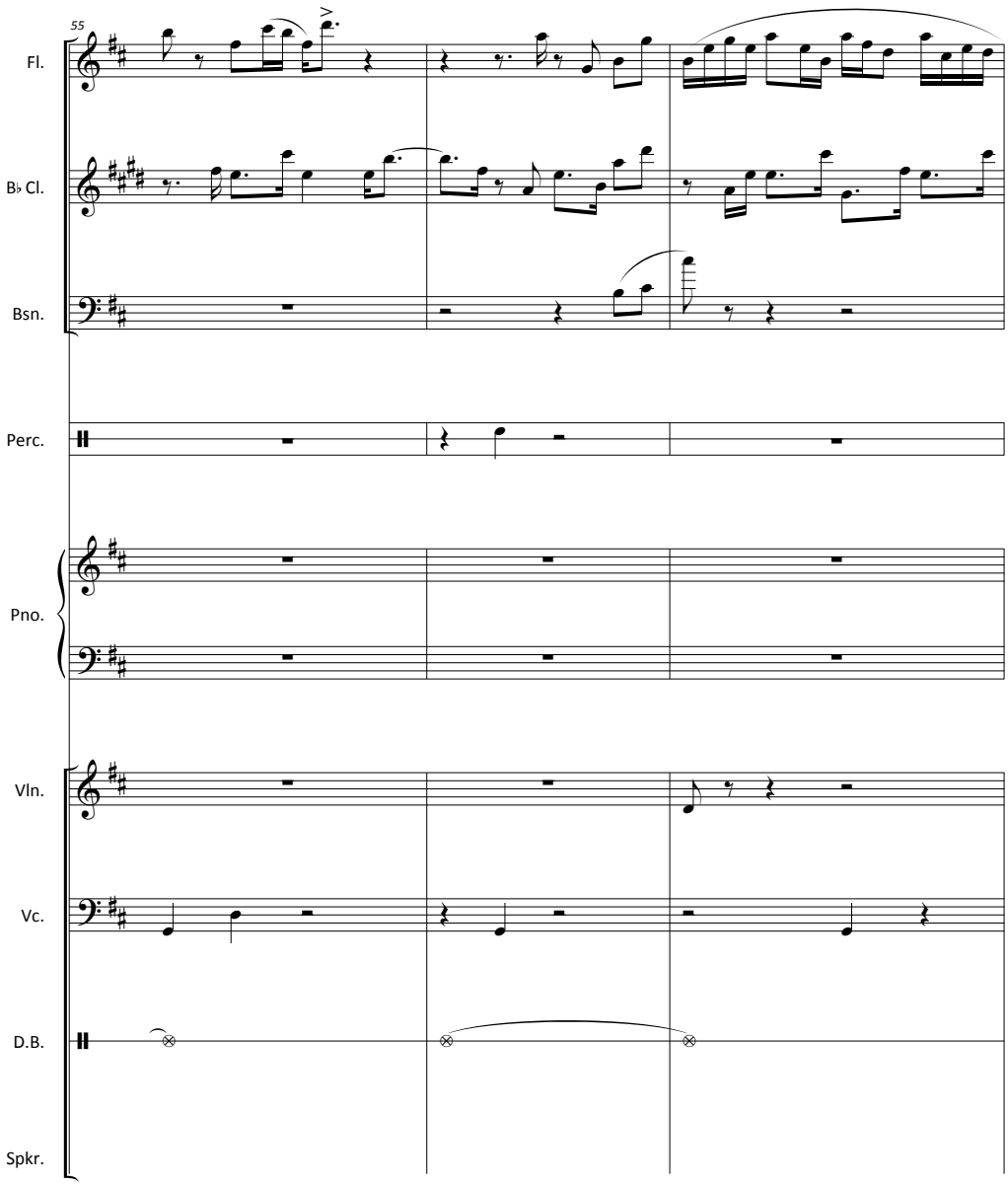

40
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
mp
p
mp

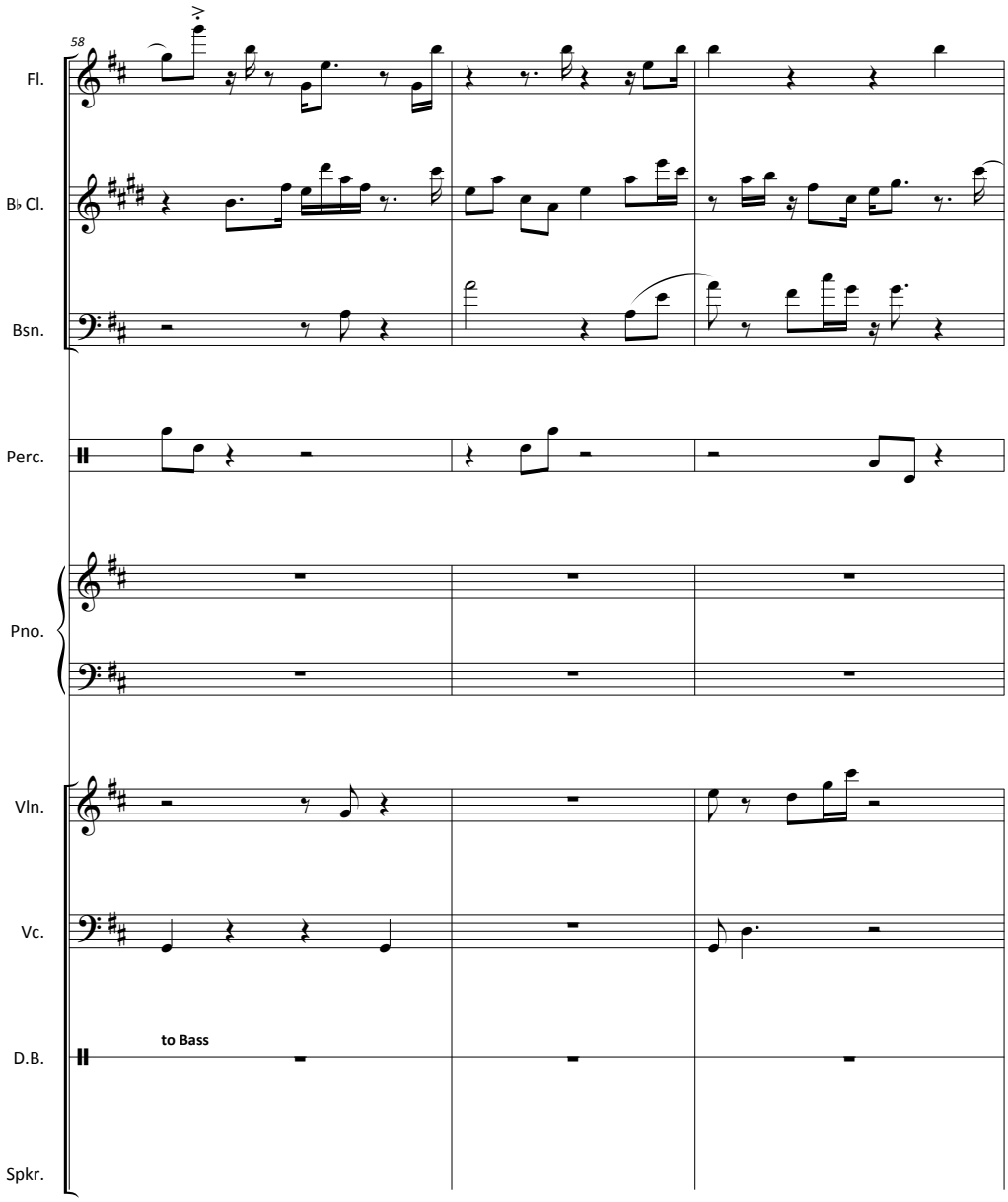

4. Corpus
43
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
p
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

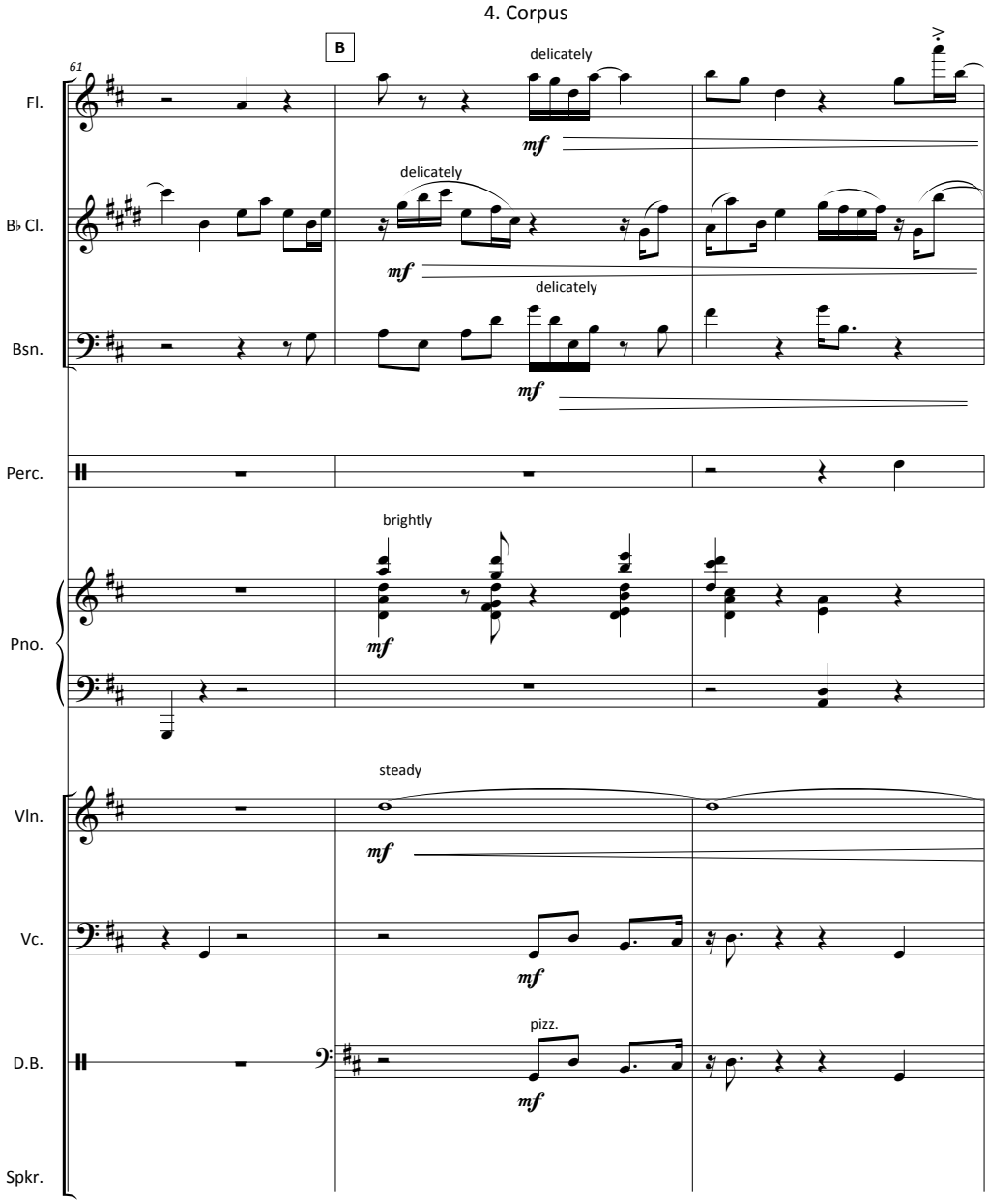

46
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
mp
mf
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

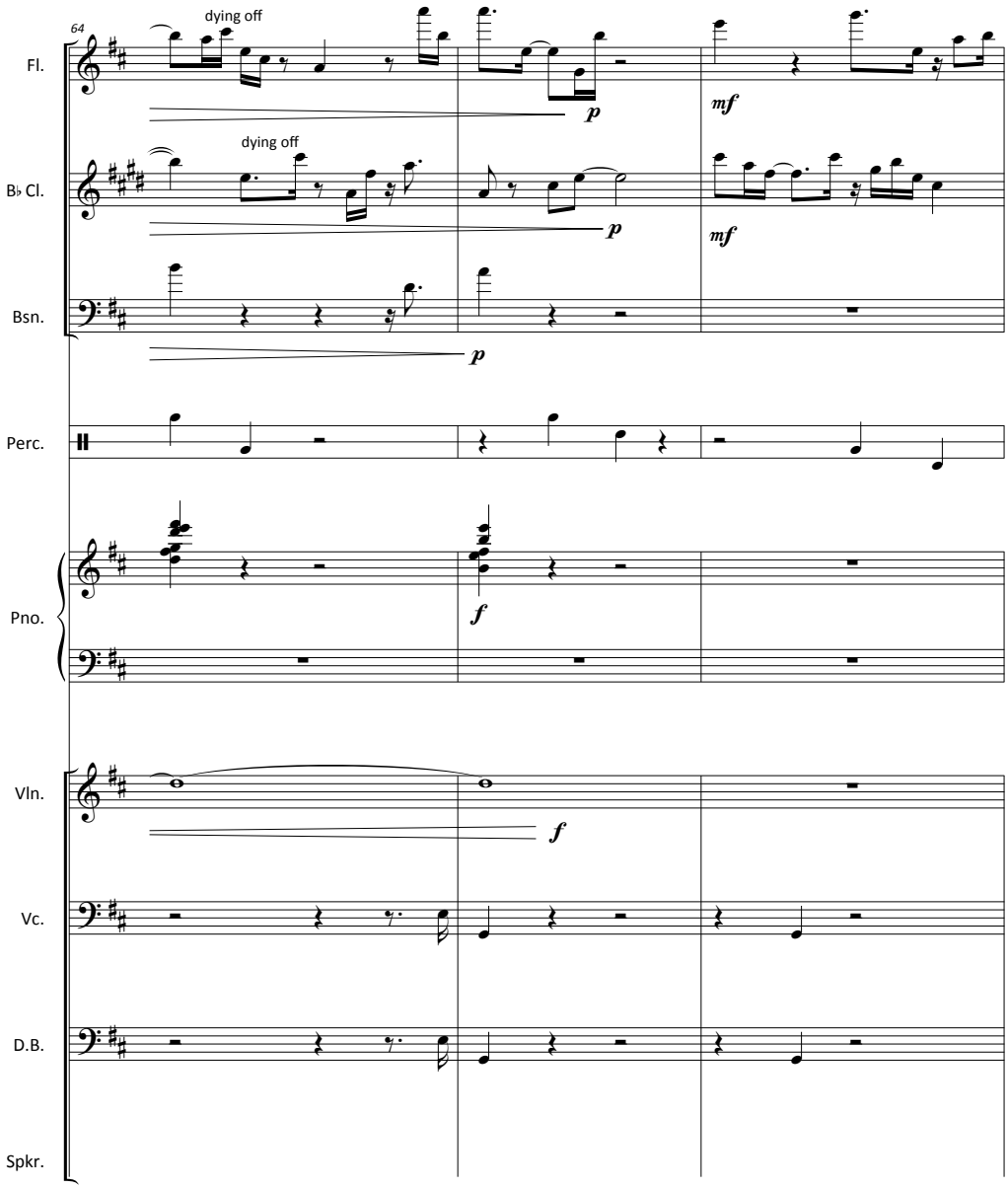

49
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
p
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

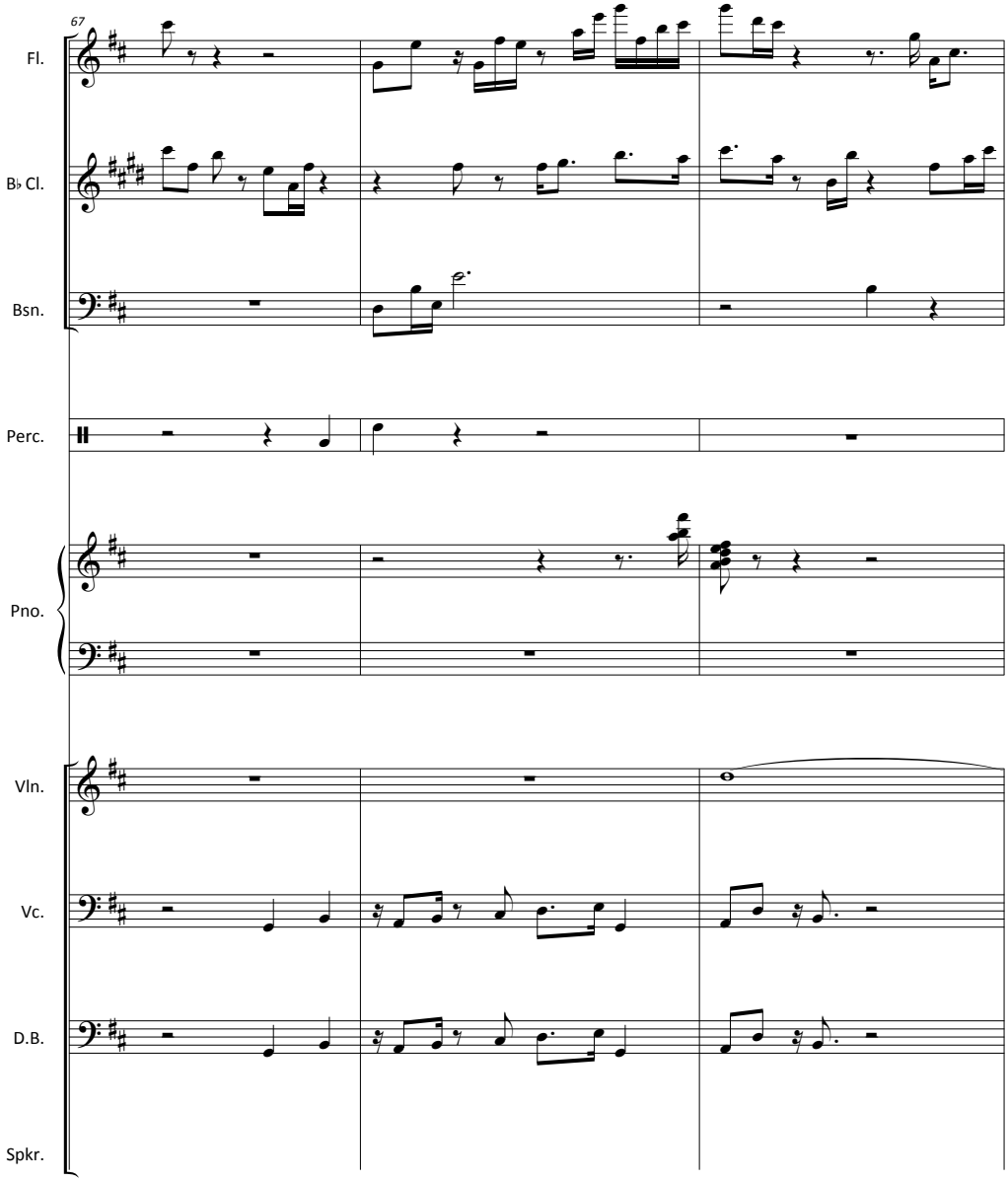

52
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
sul C
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.


55
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

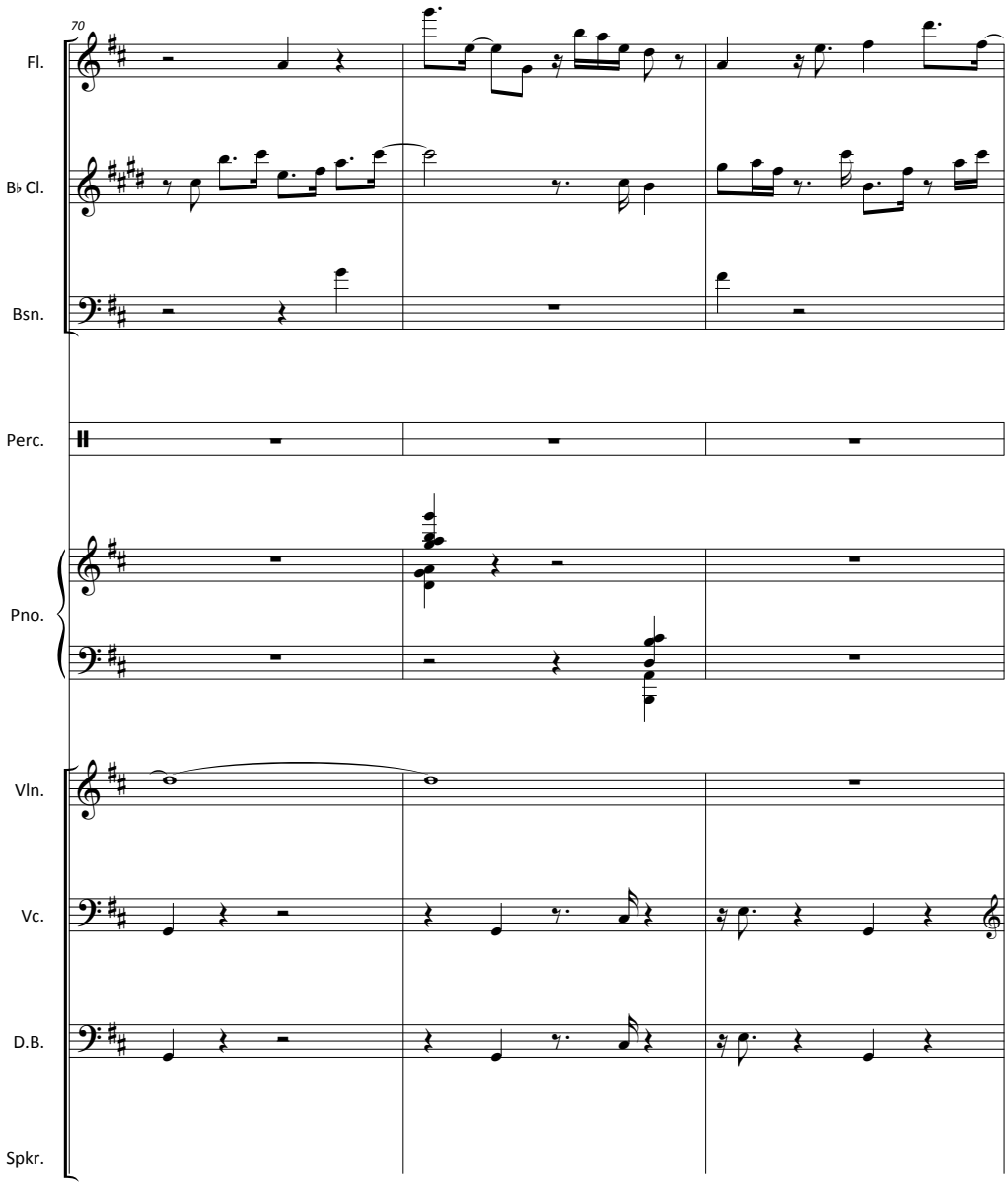

58
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
to Bass
D.B.
Spkr.

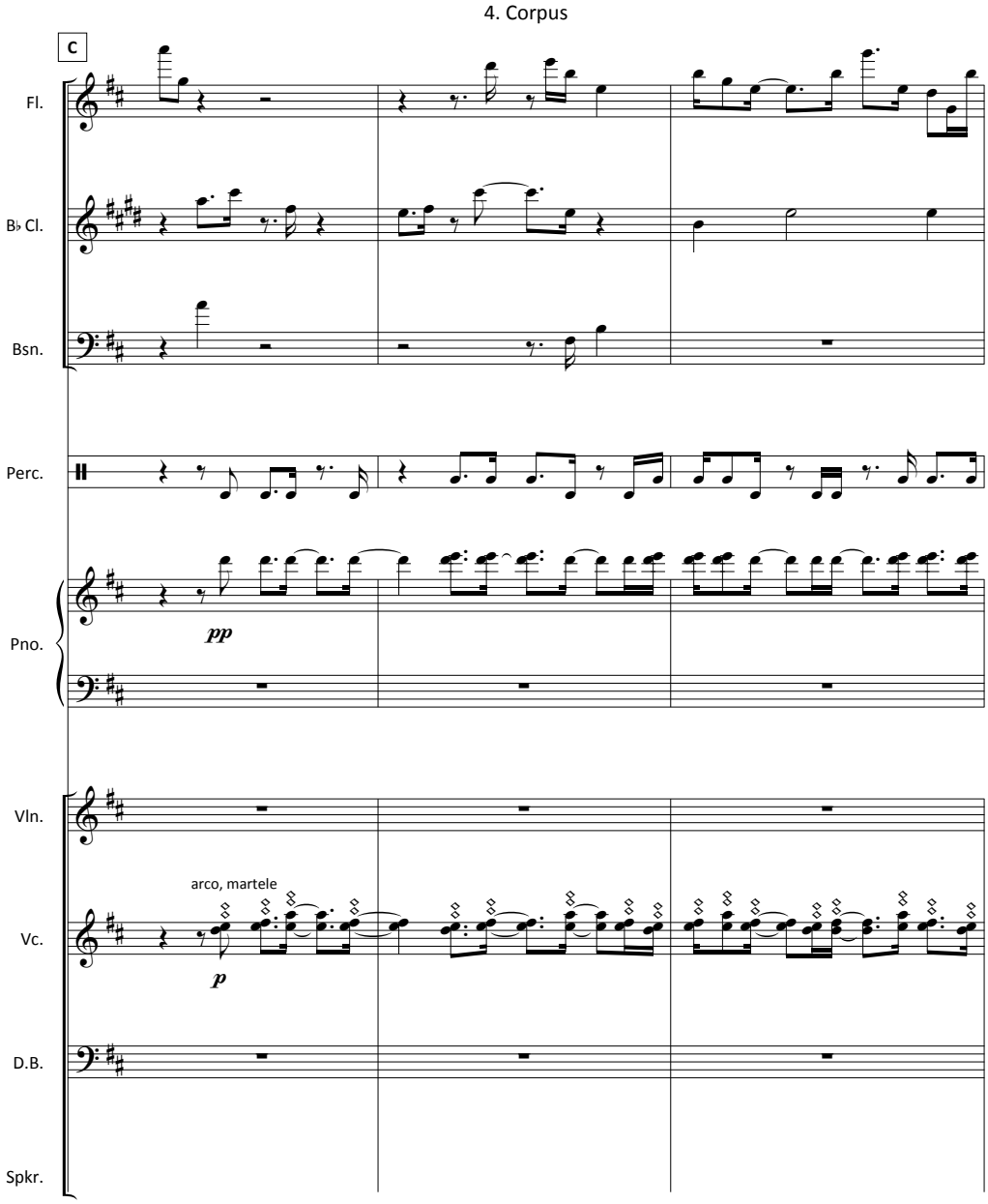

4. Corpus
B
61
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
delicately
mf
brightly
steady
pizz.

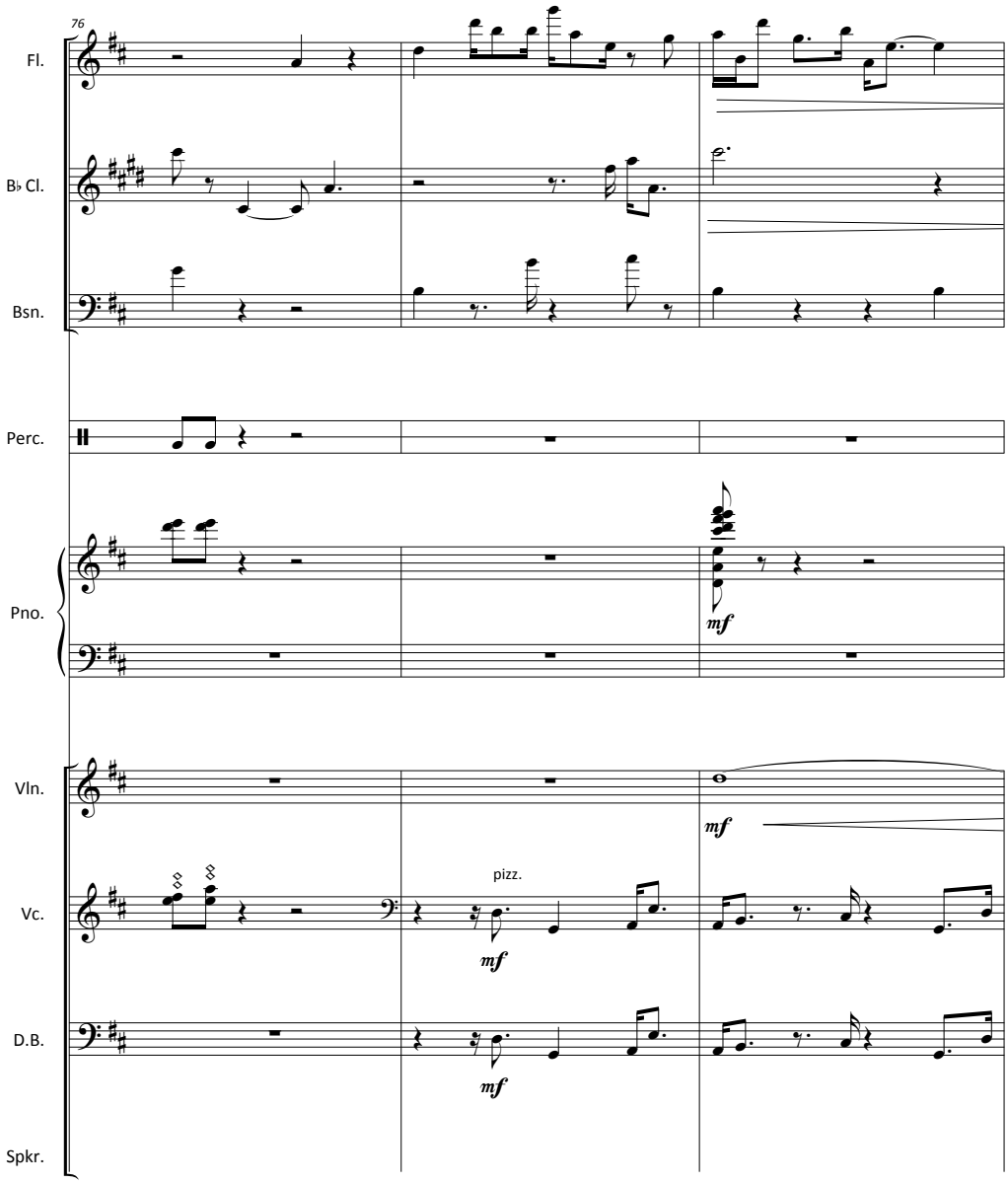

64
dying off
Fl.
p
mf
dying off
B♭ Cl.
p
mf
Bsn.
p
Perc.
Pno.
f
Vln.
f
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

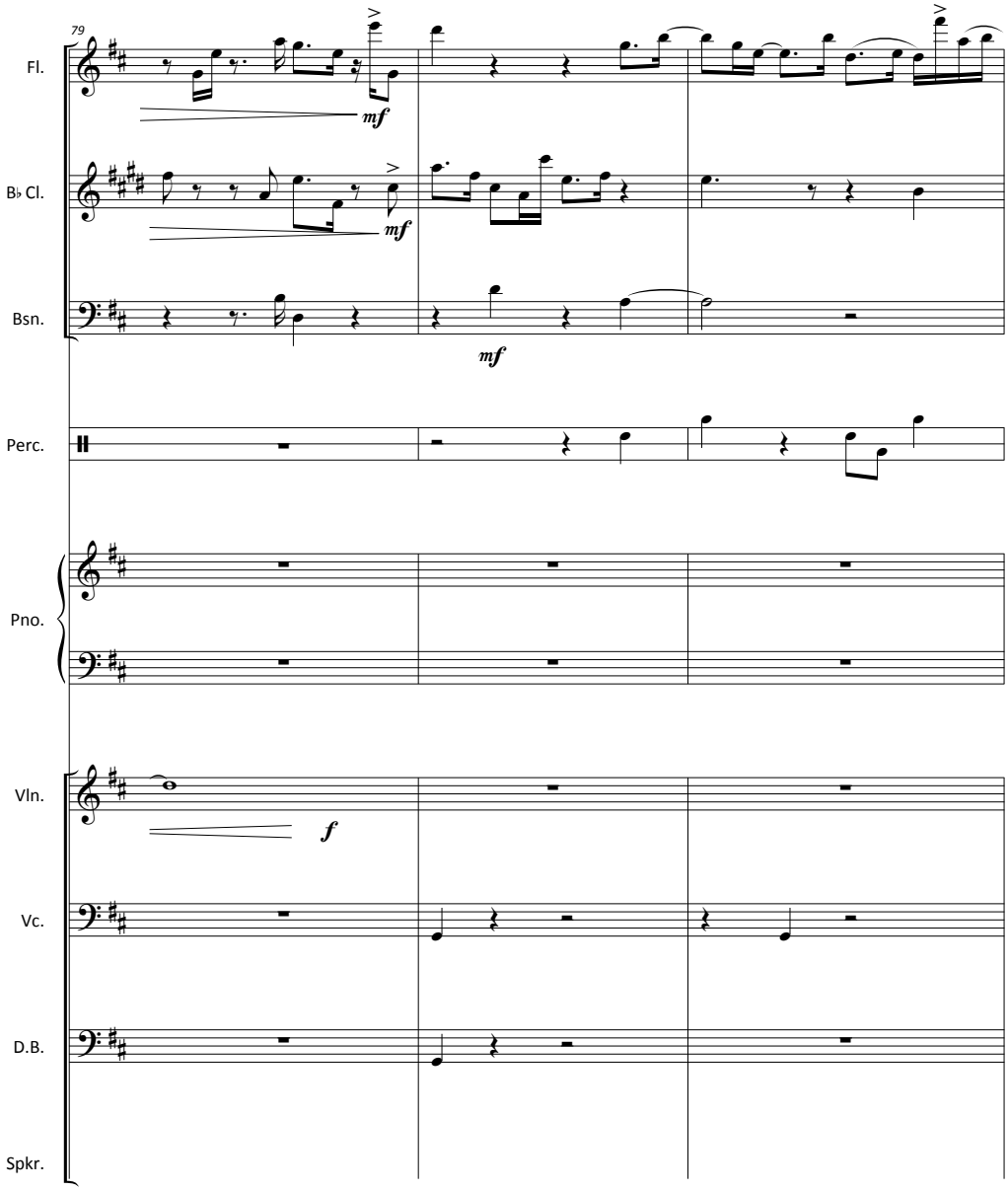

67
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

4. Corpus

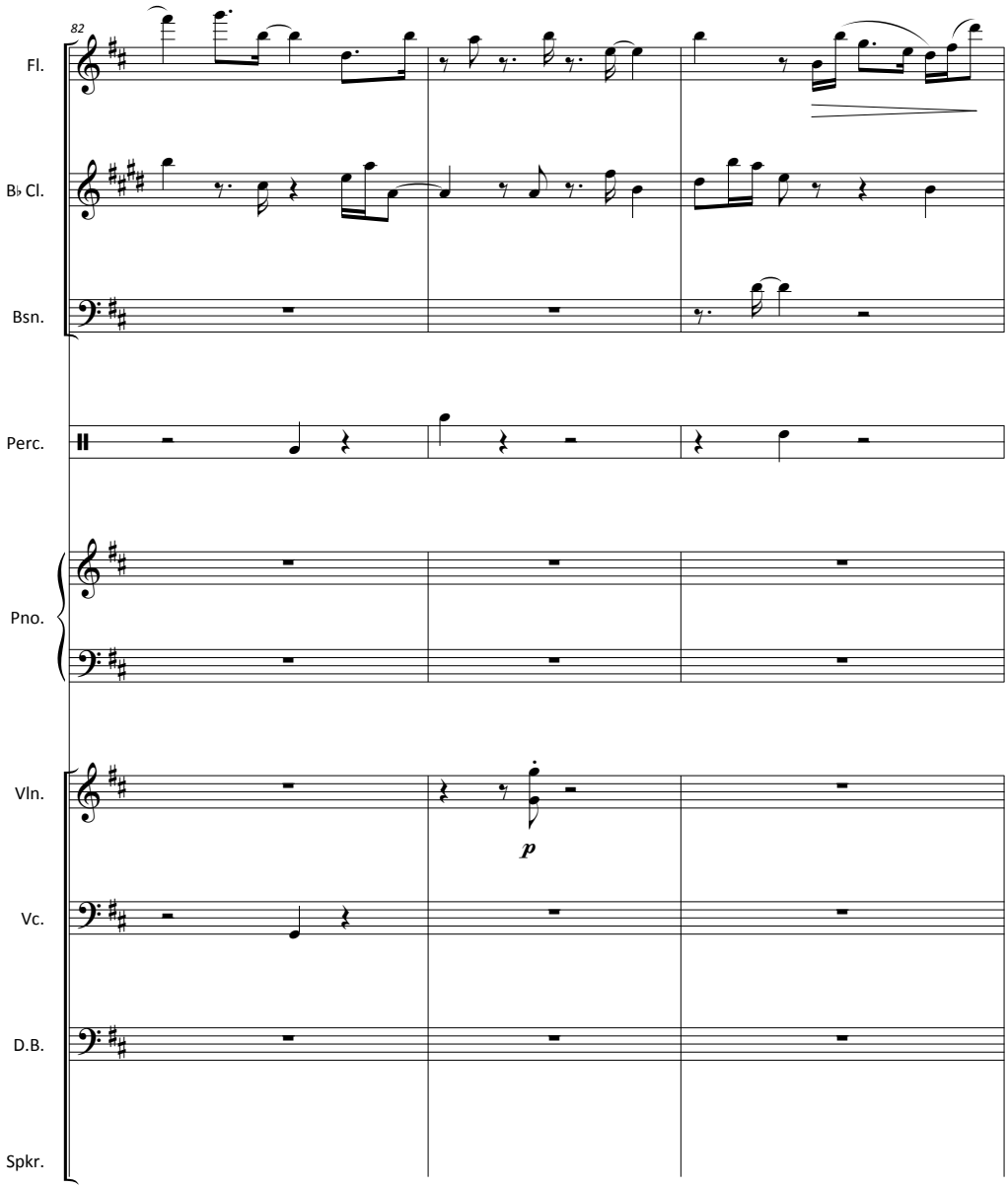


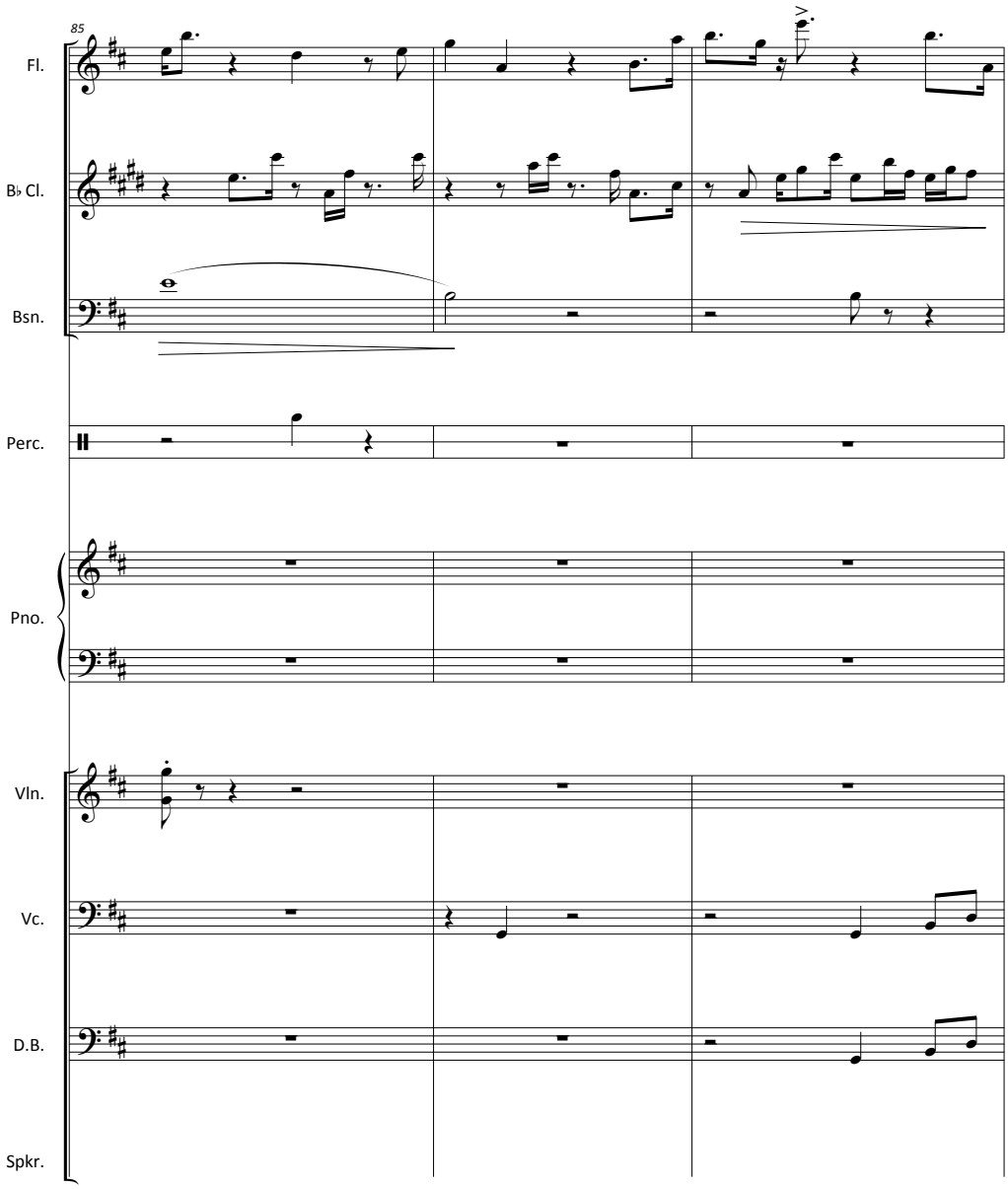

4. Corpus
C
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
pp
Vln.
arco, martele
Vc.
p
D.B.
Spkr.

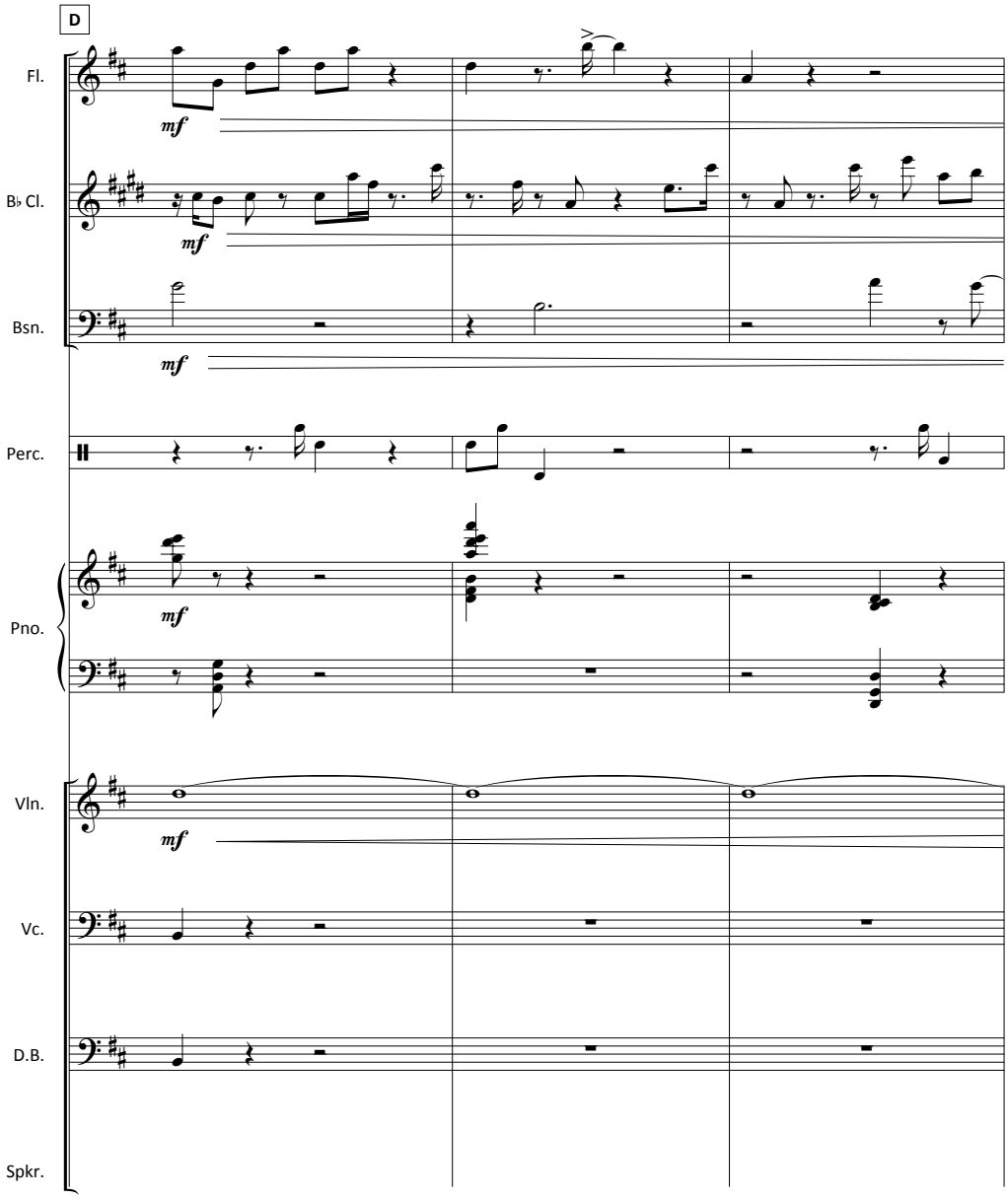

76
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
mf
Vln.
mf
pizz.
Vc.
mf
D.B.
mf
Spkr.

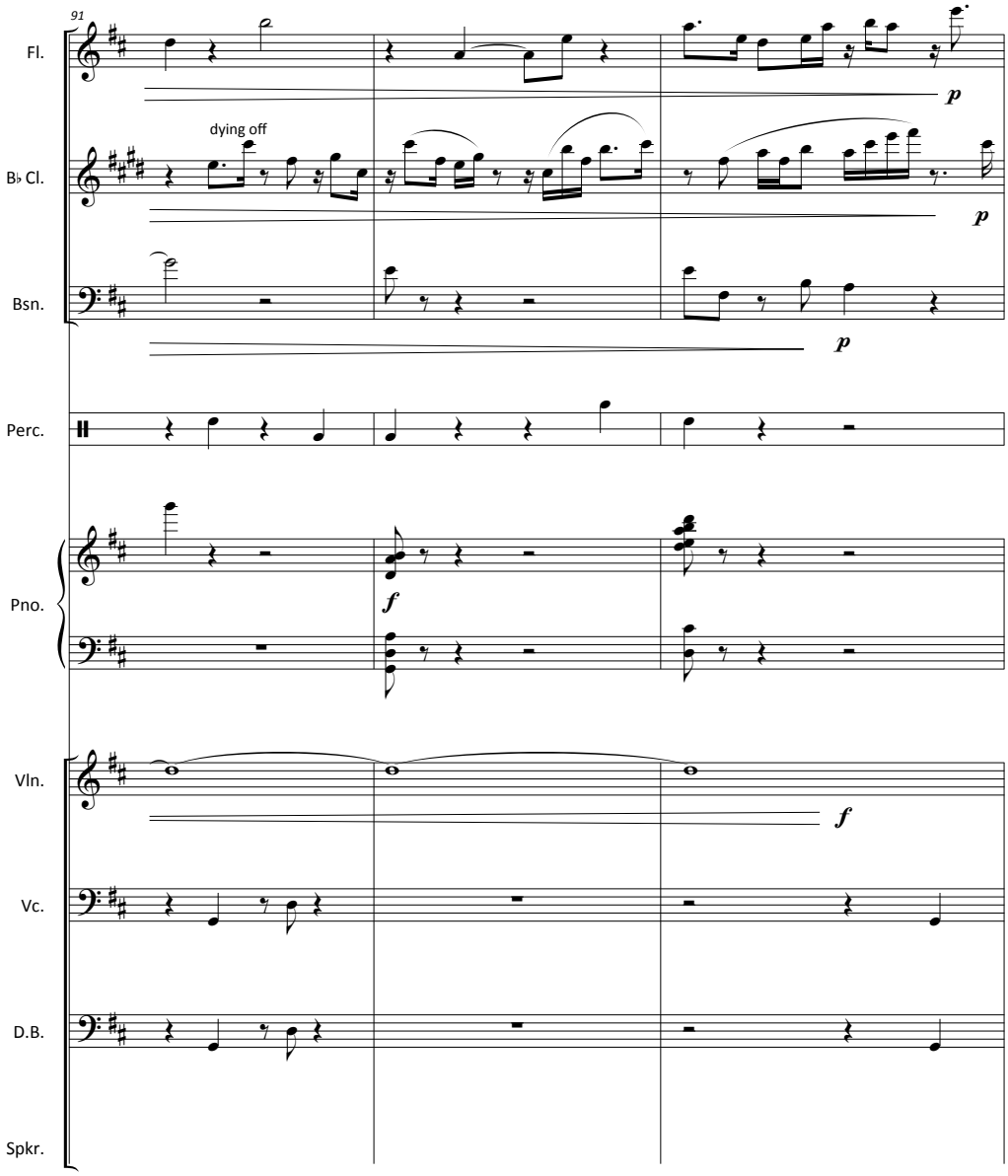

79
Fl.
mf
B♭ Cl.
mf
Bsn.
mf
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
f
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

4. Corpus

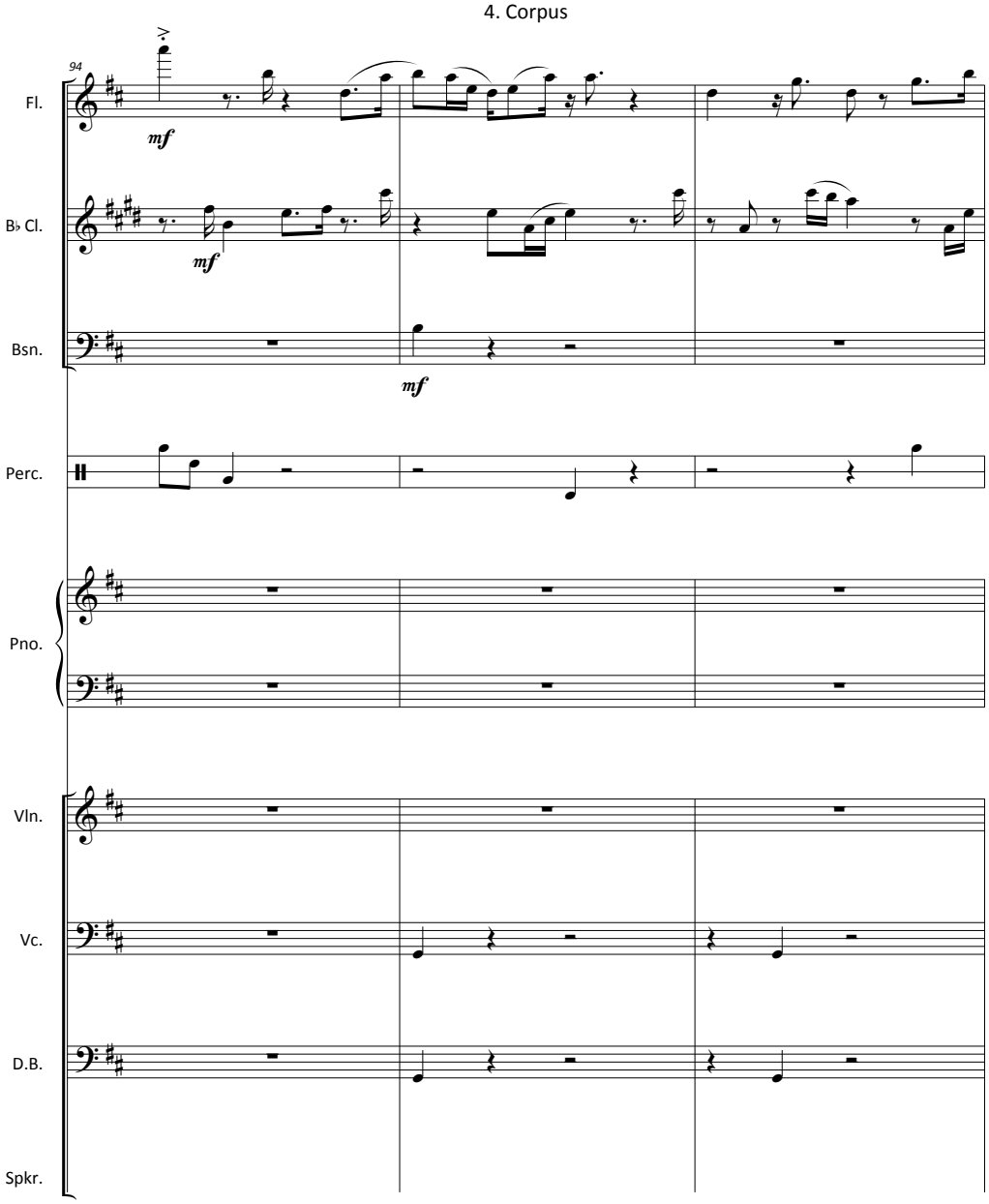


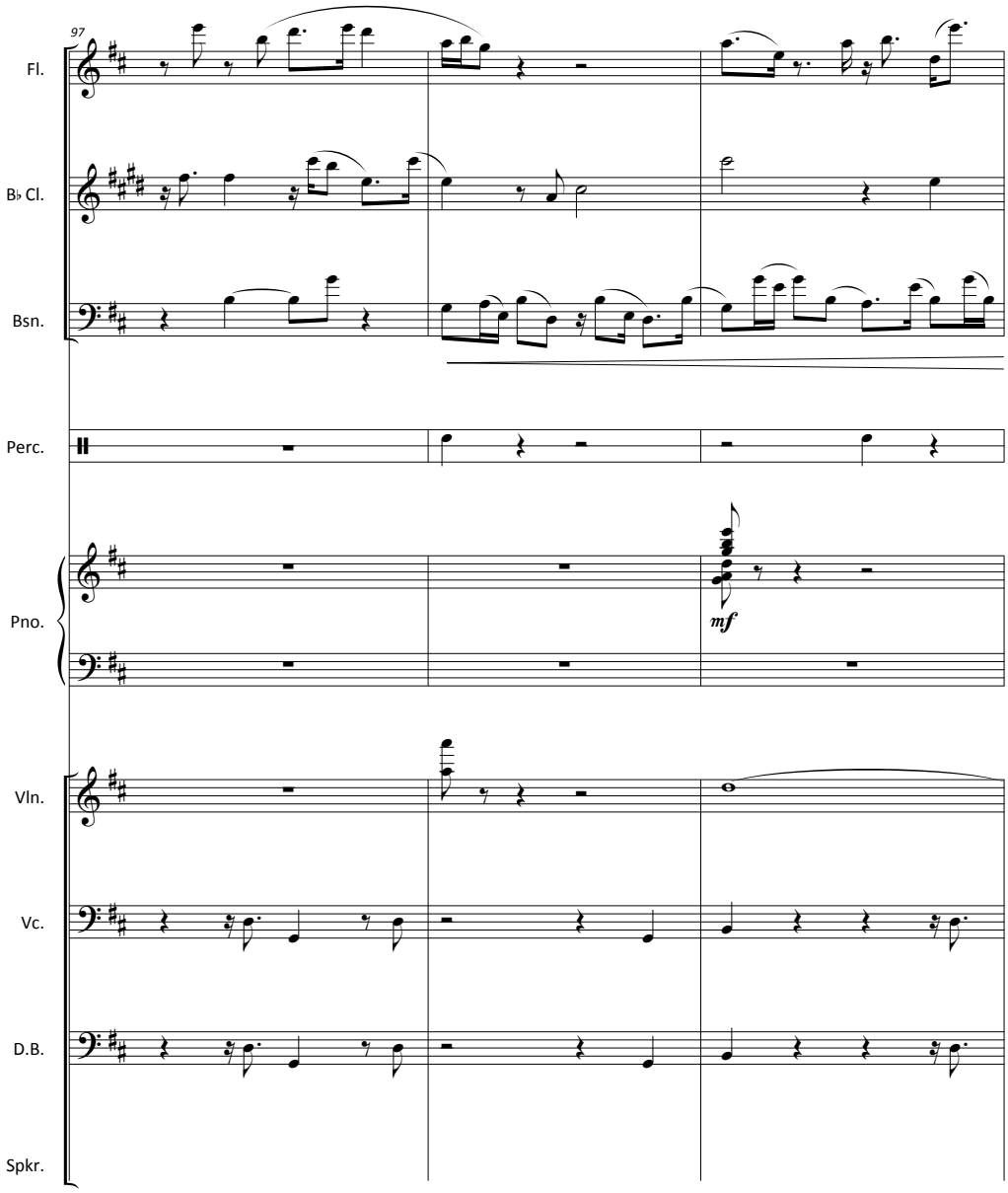

85
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.


D
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
mf

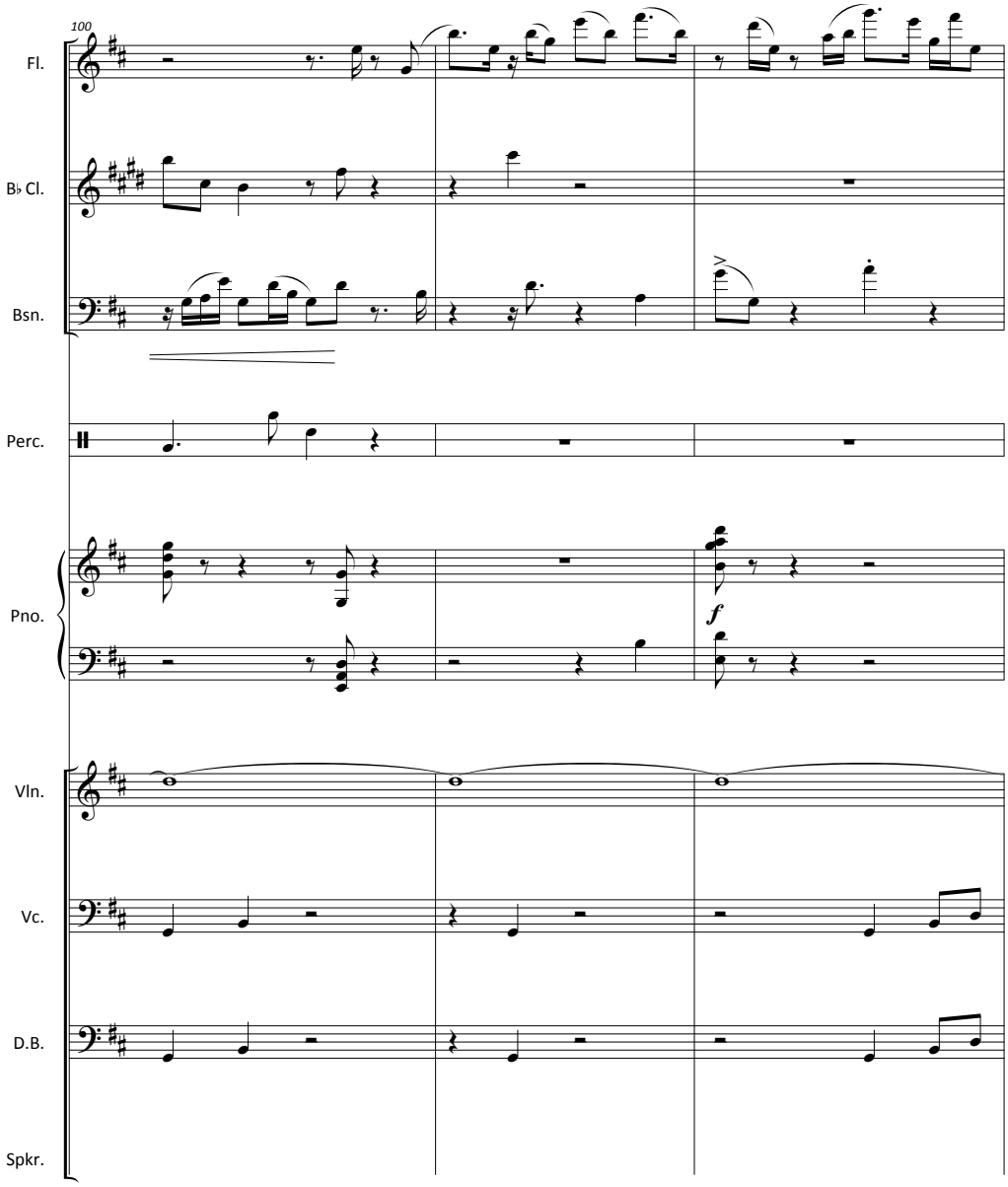

91
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
dying off
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p
p
p
f
f

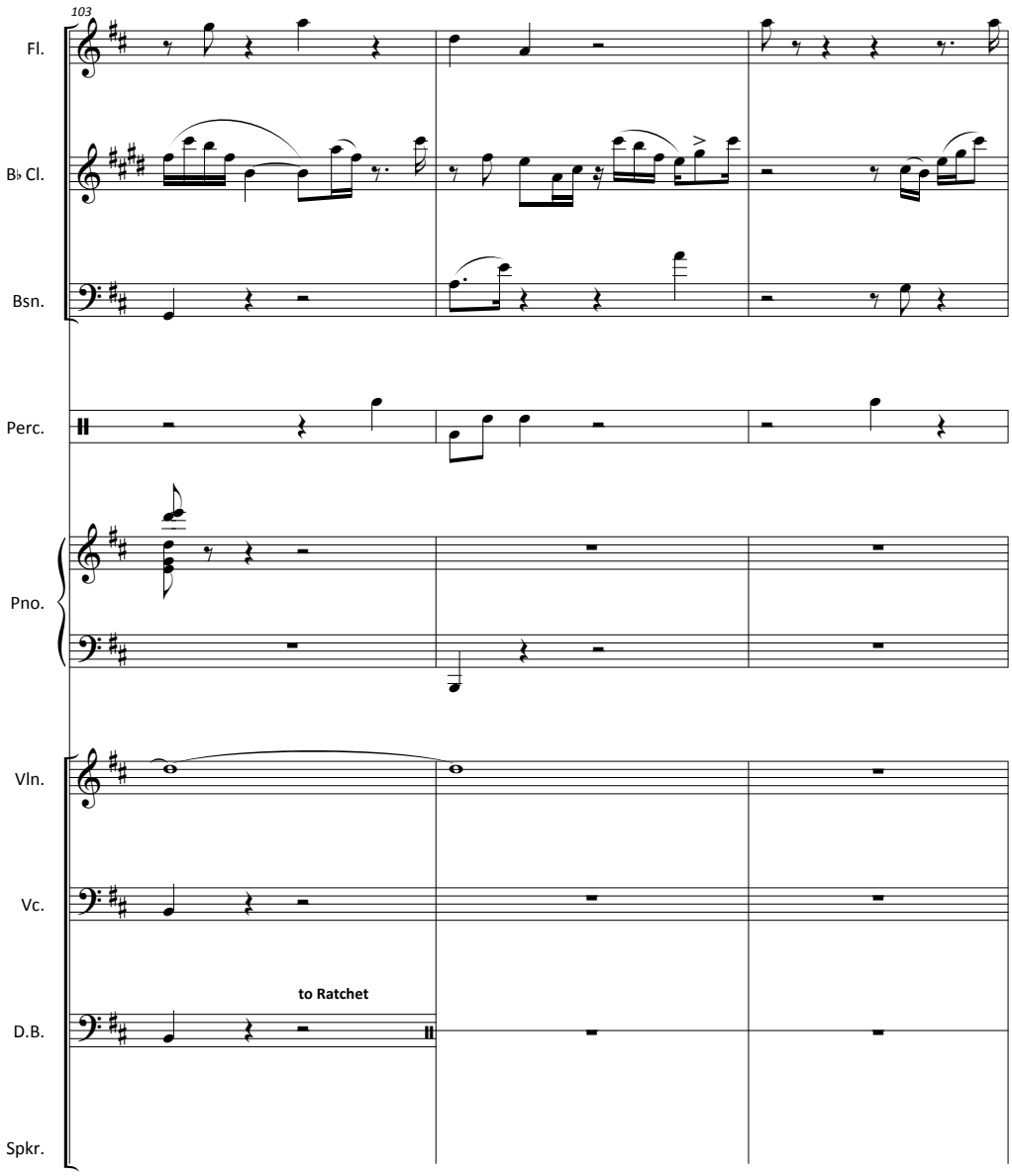
4. Corpus

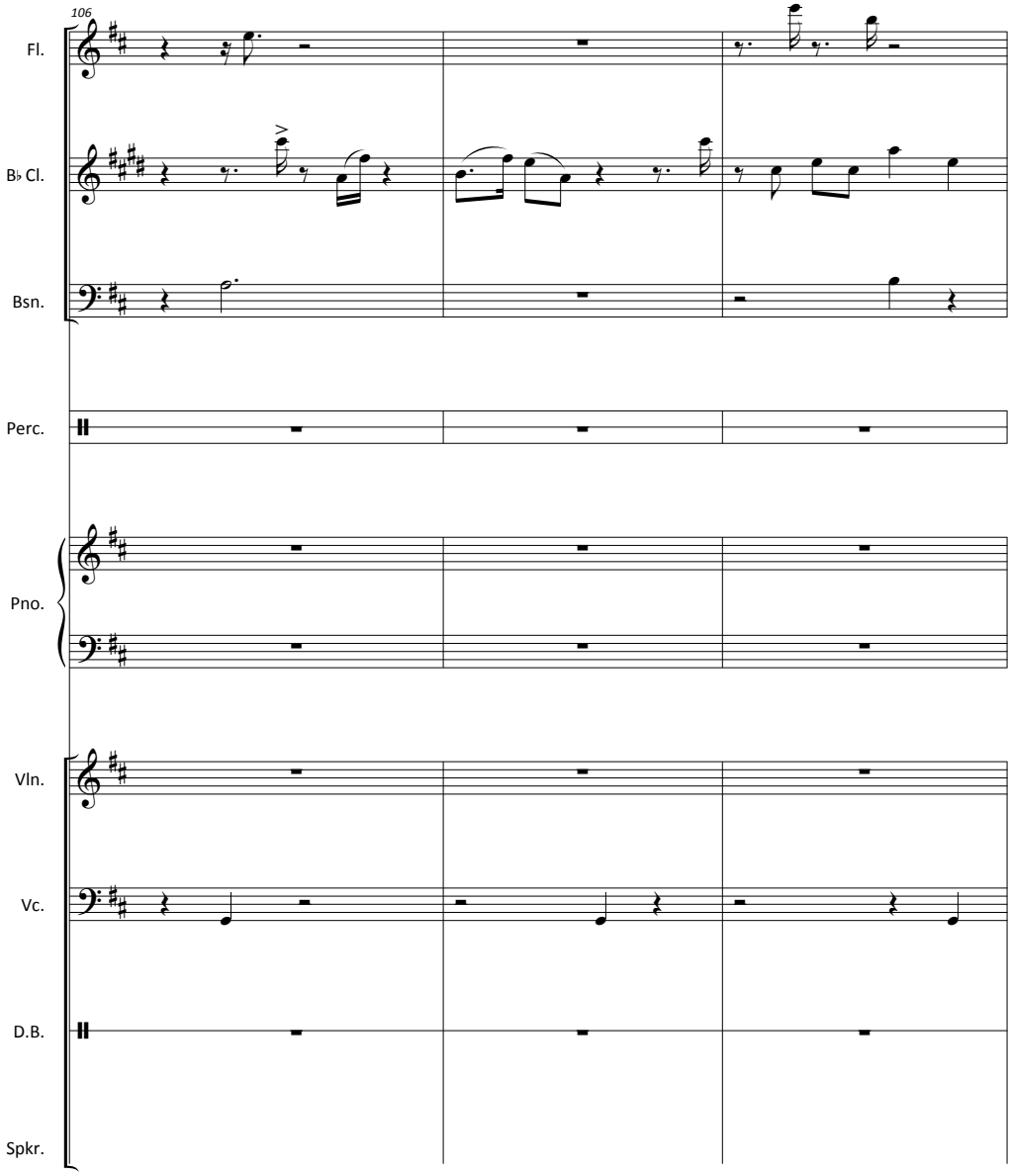


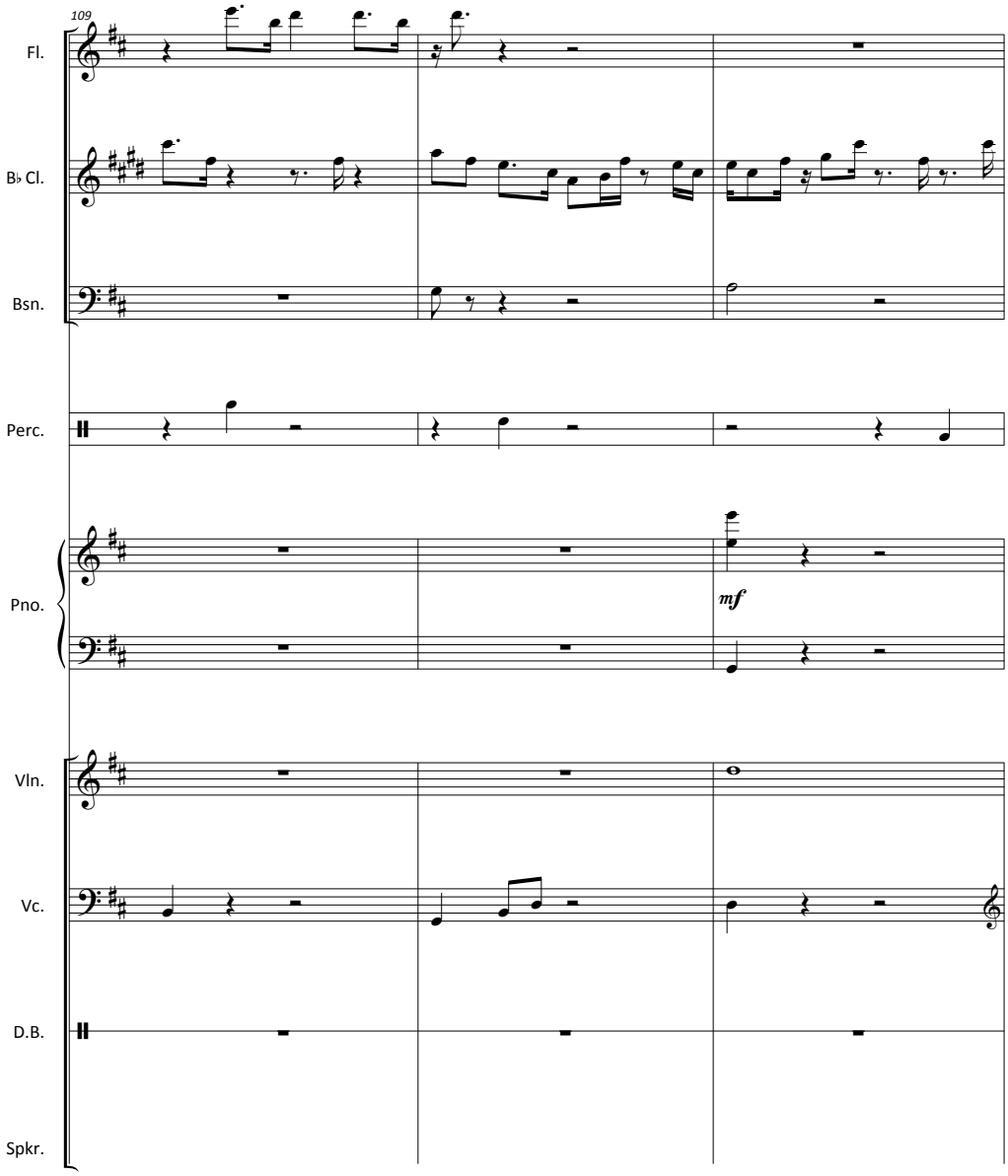

97
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
mf
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

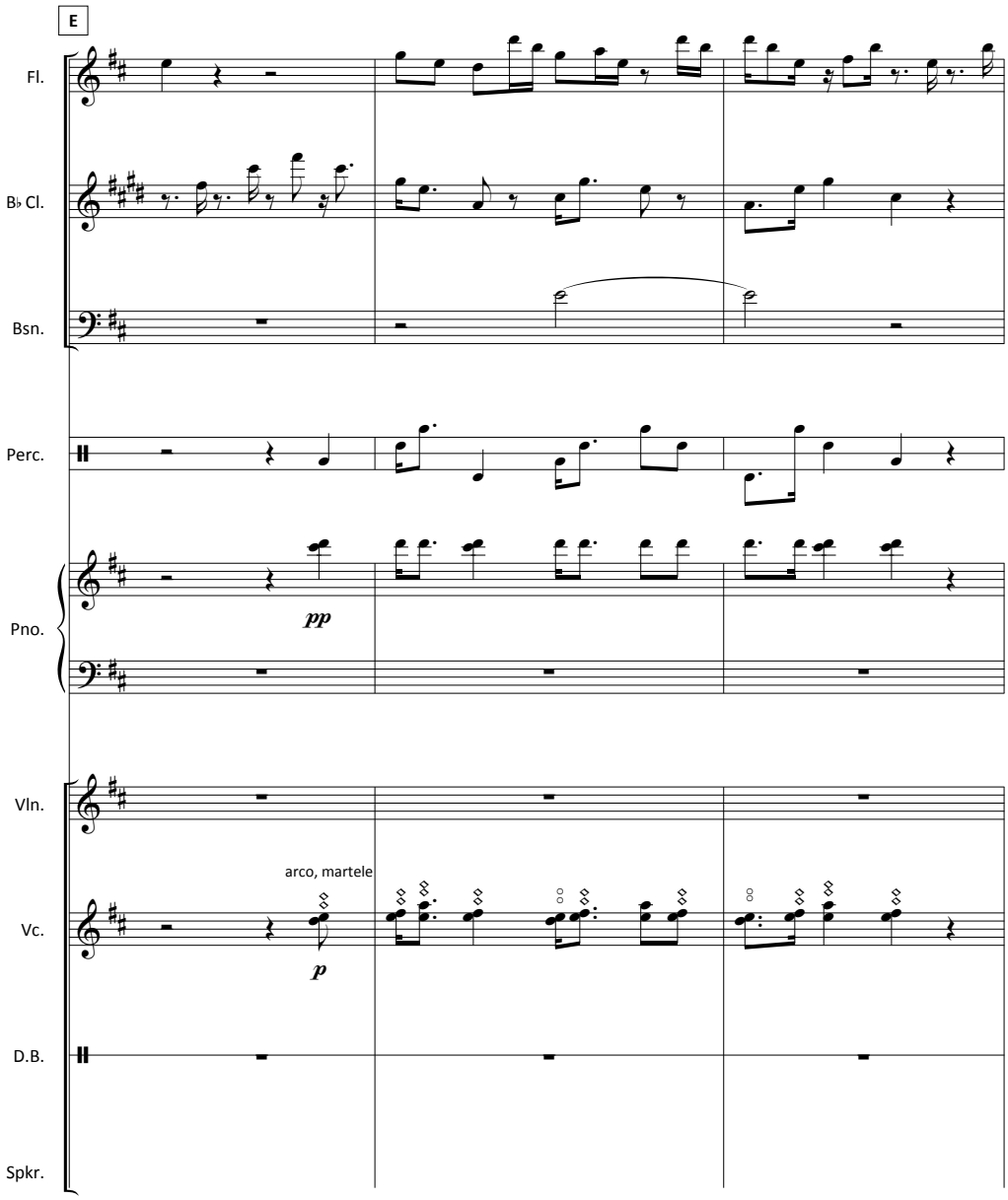
4. Corpus

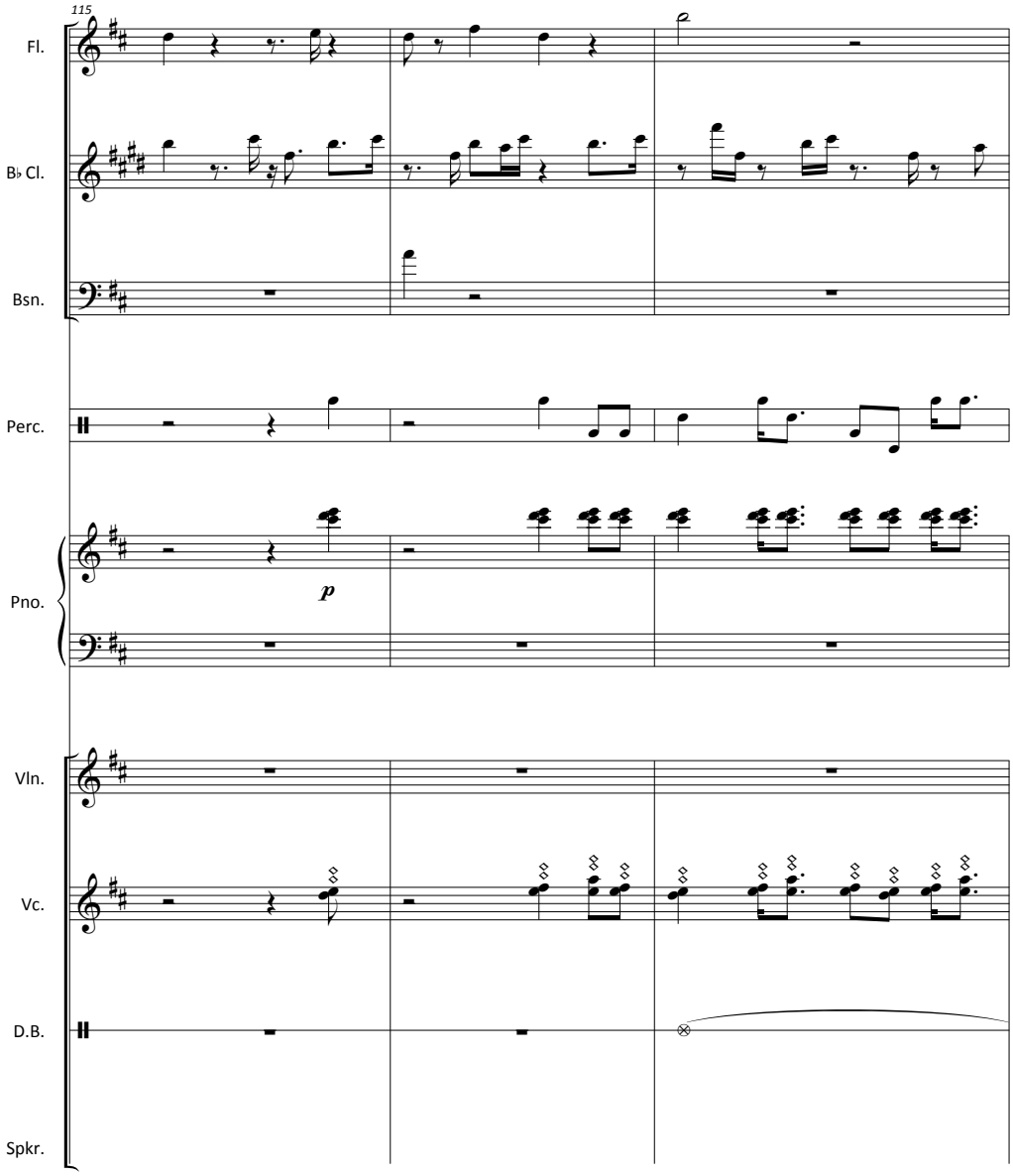


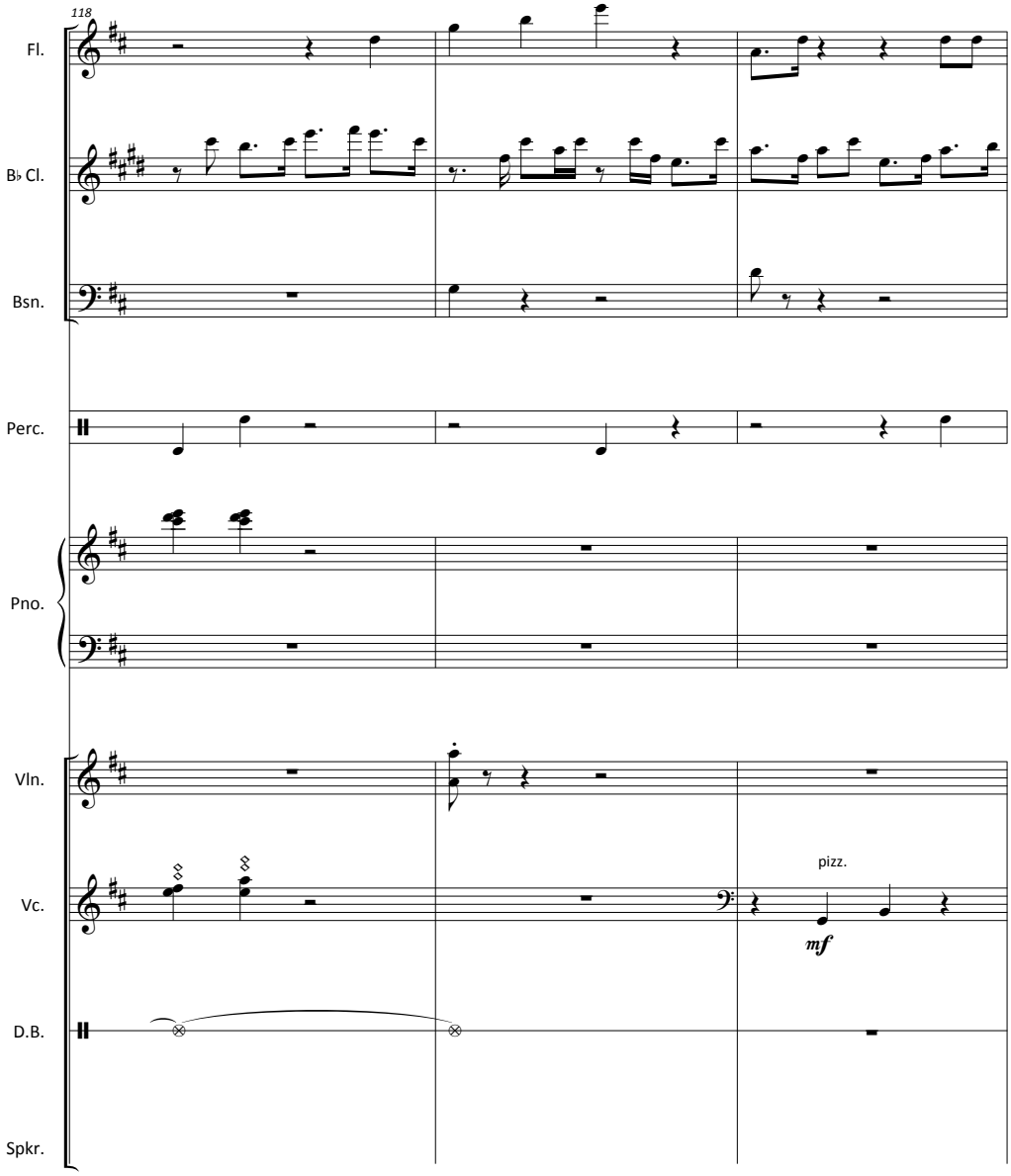

103
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
to Ratchet
D.B.
Spkr.

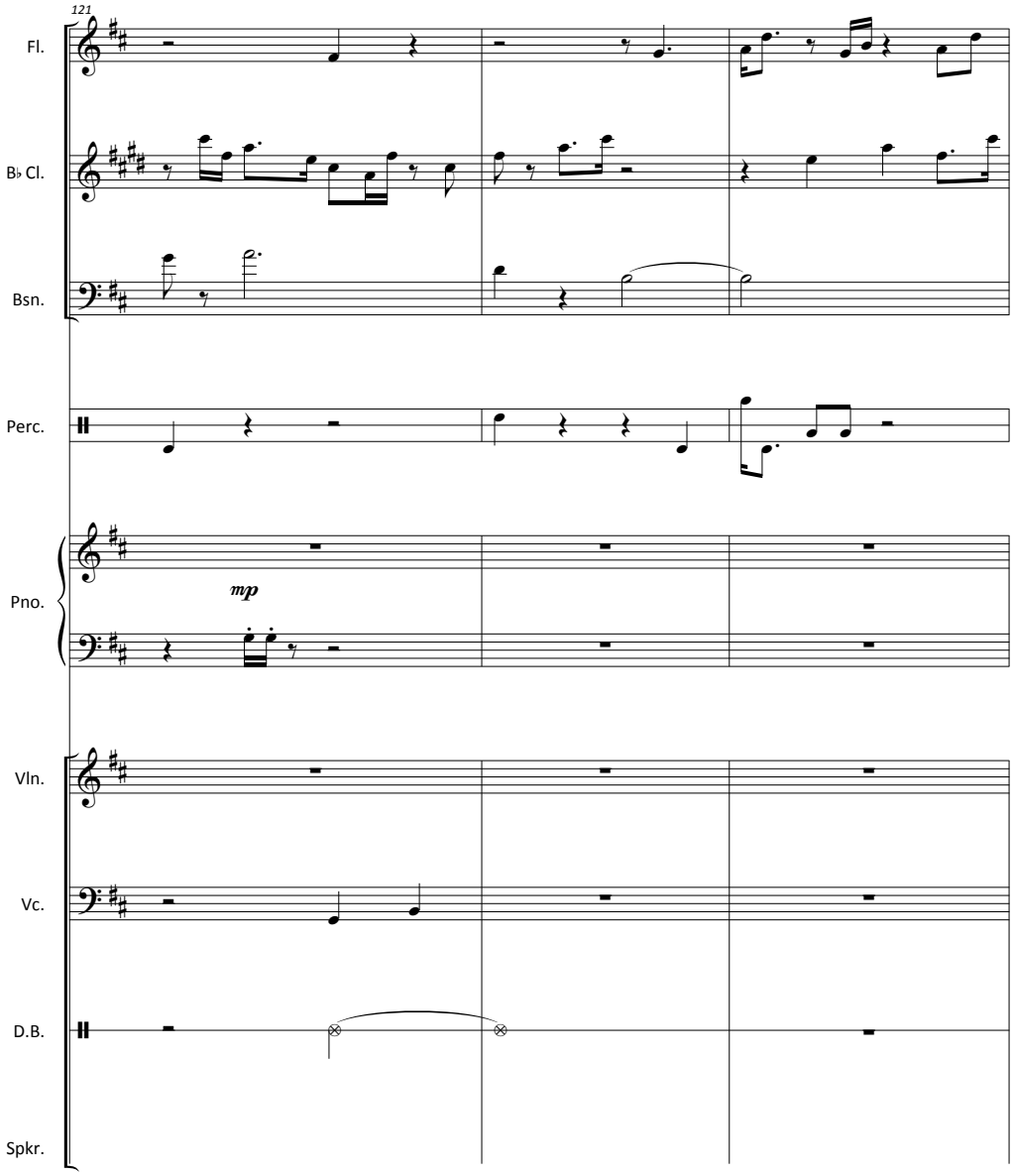

106
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.


109
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
mf
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

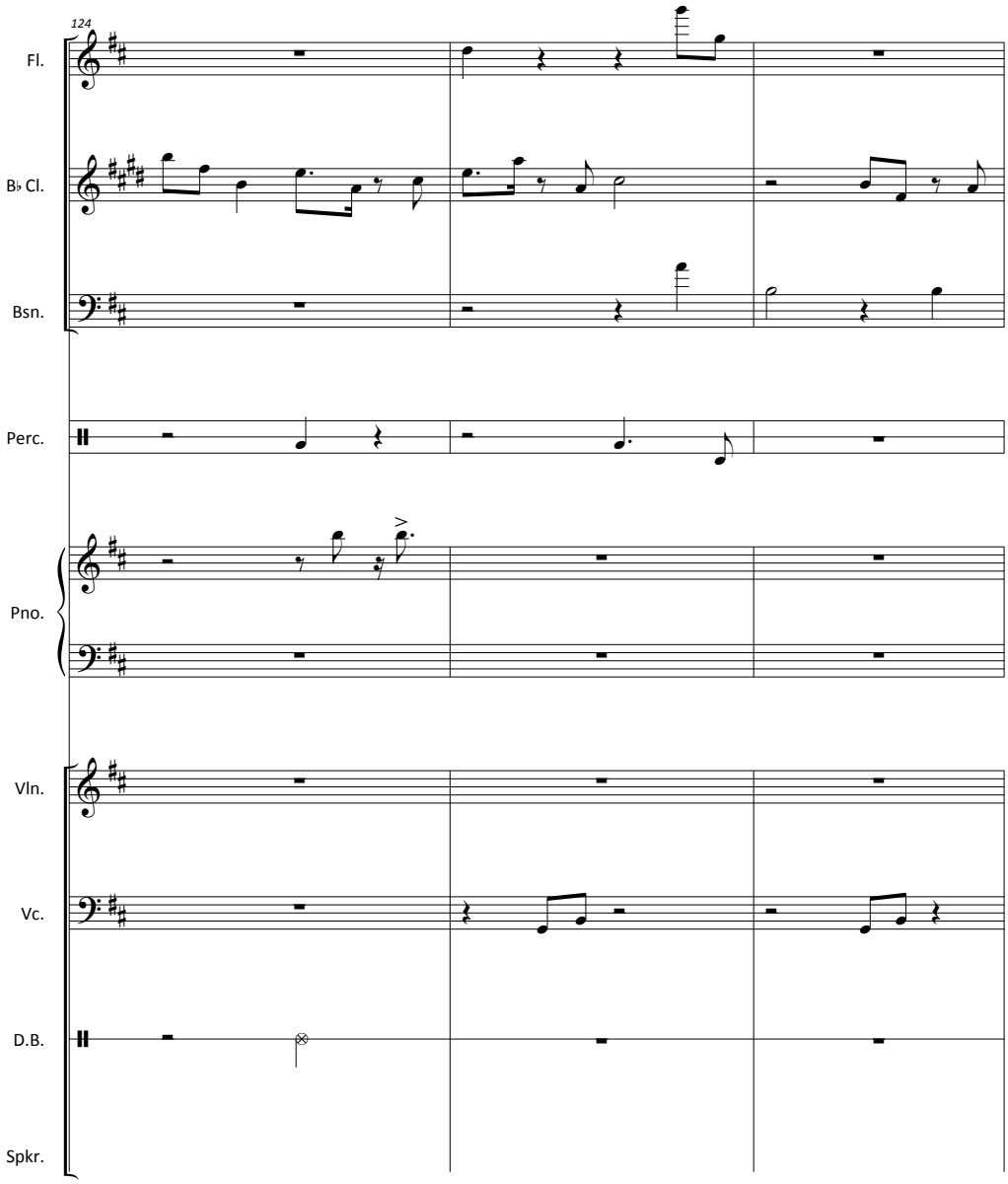

E
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
pp
Vln.
arco, martele
Vc.
p
D.B.
Spkr.

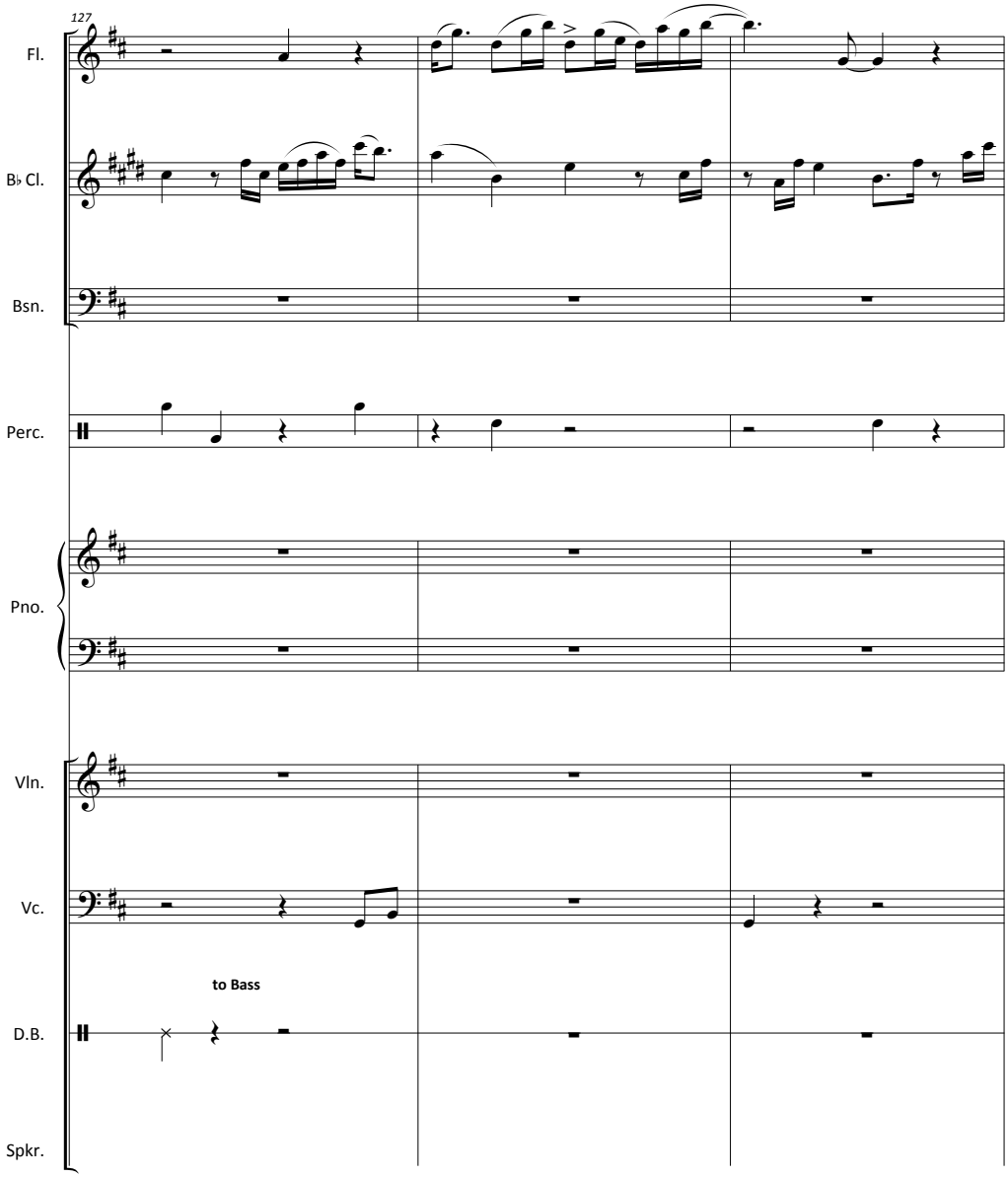

115
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
p
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

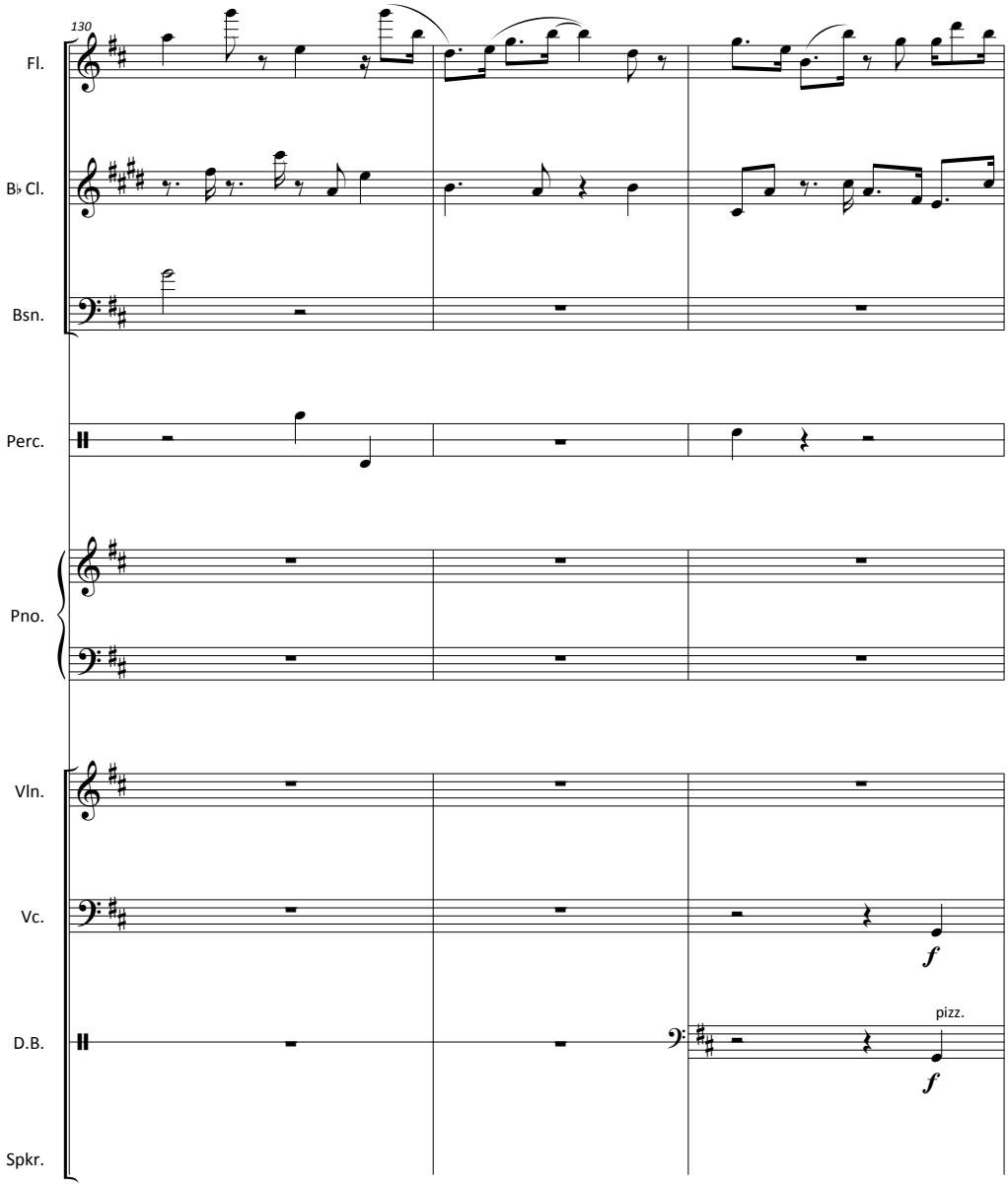

118
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
pizz.
mf
D.B.
Spkr.

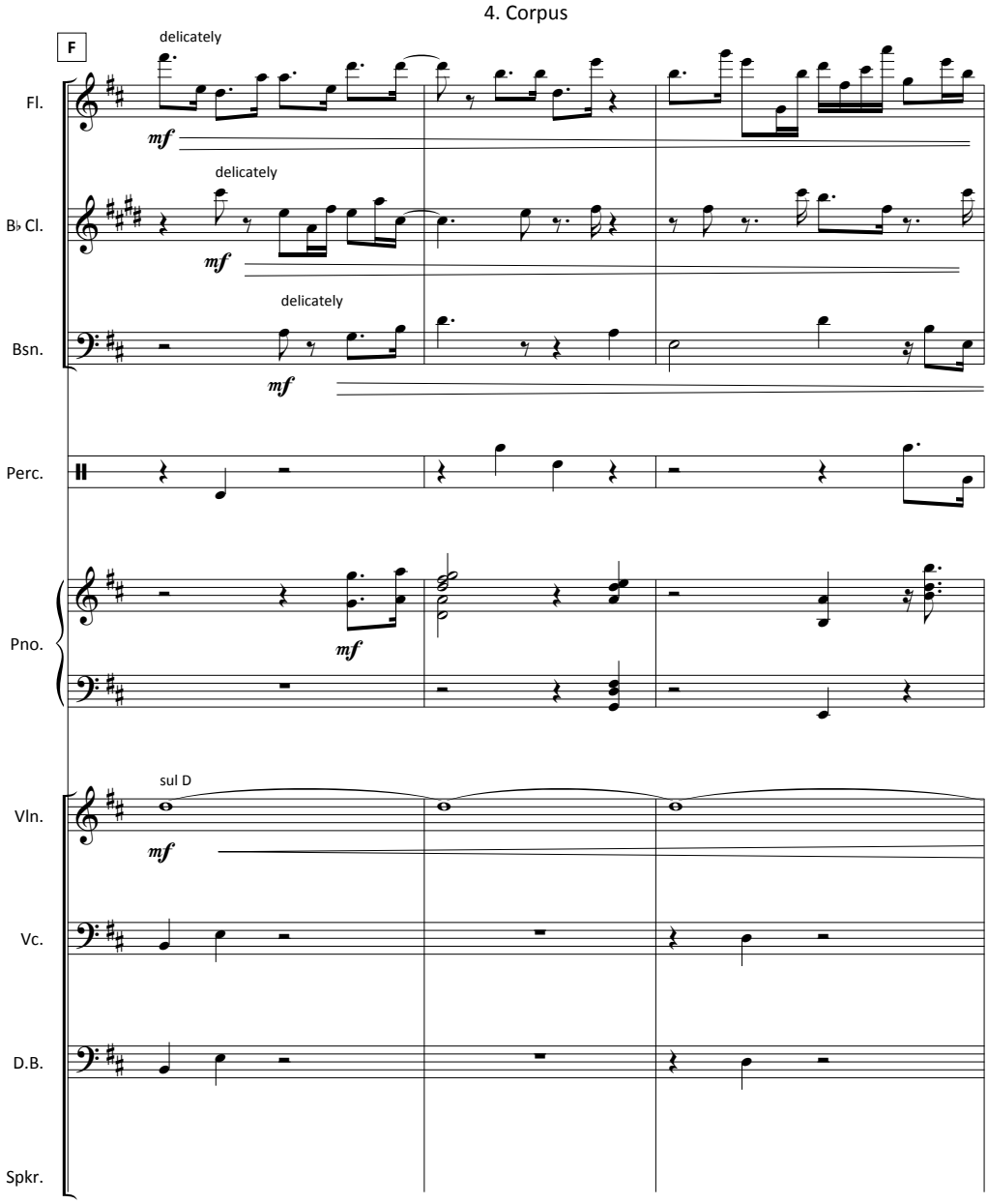

121
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
mp
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

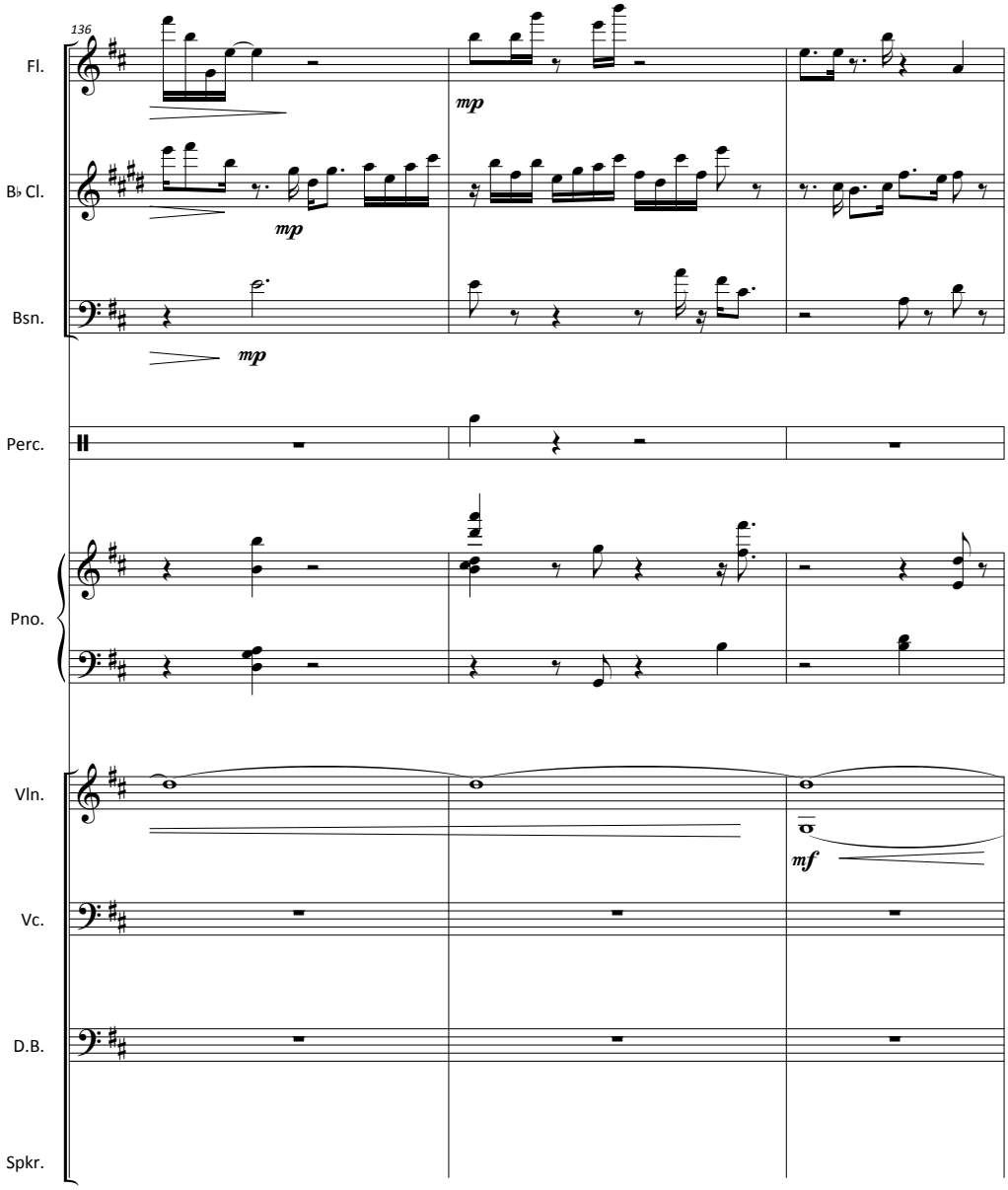
4. Corpus

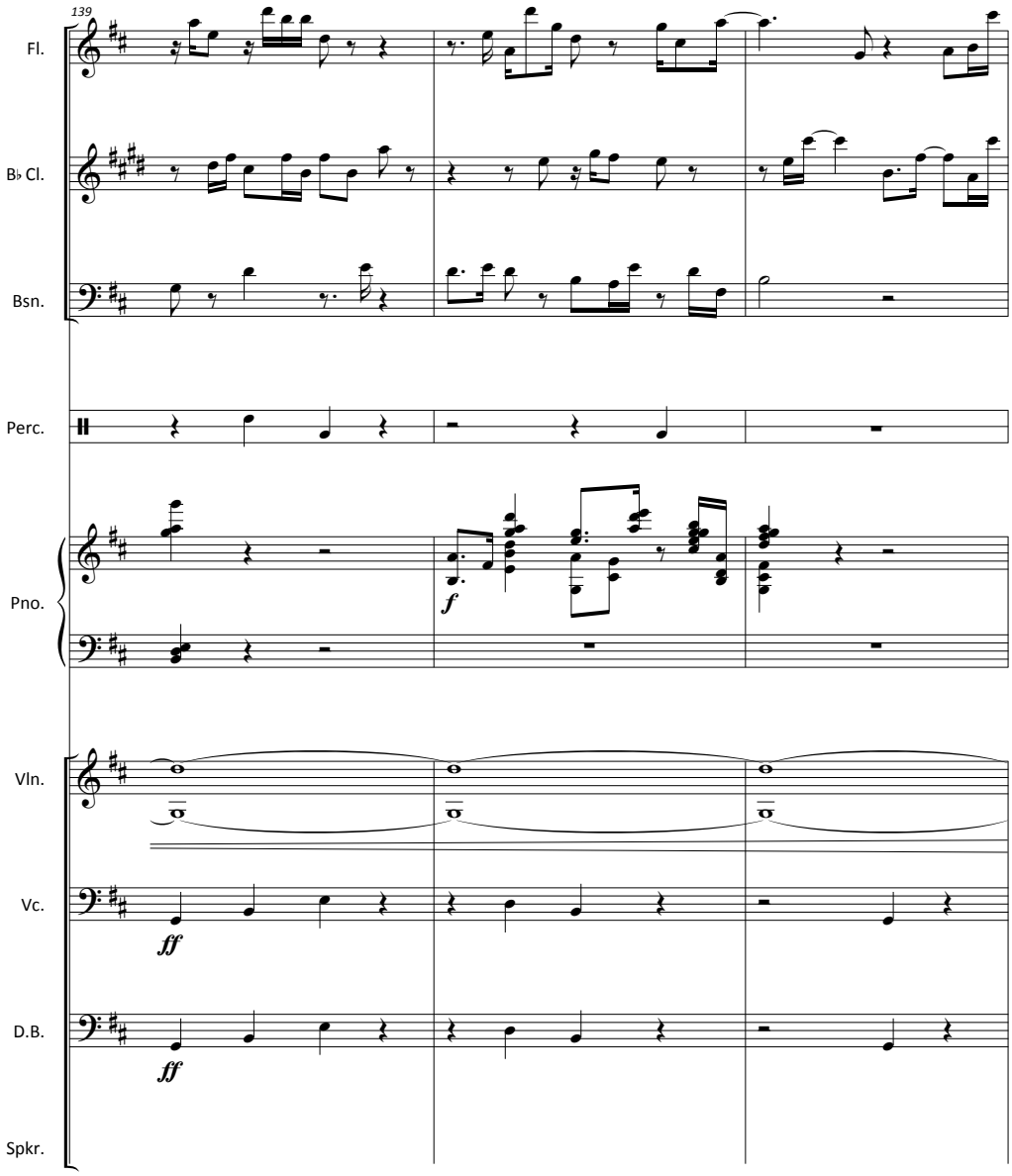


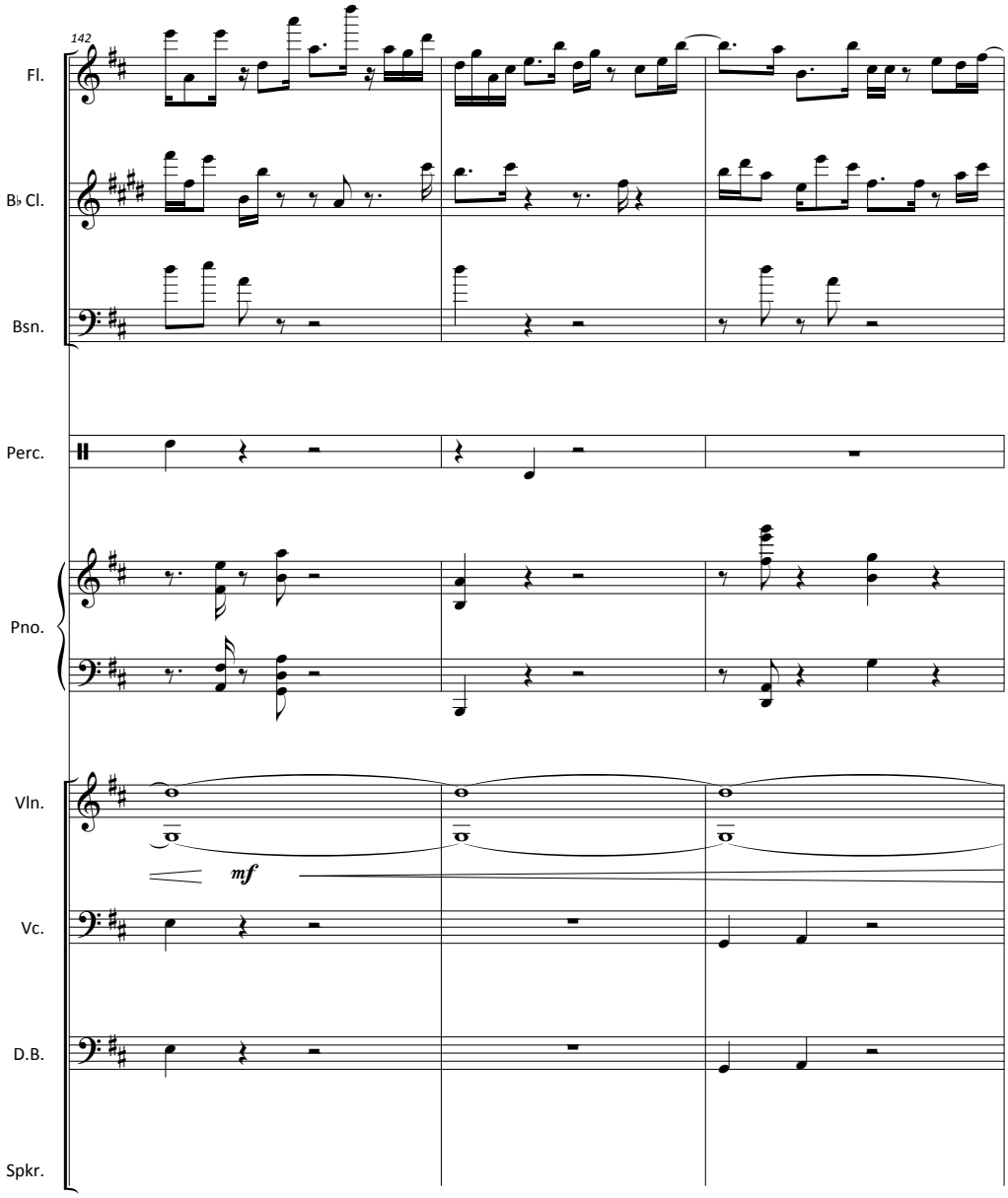

127
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
to Bass
D.B.
Spkr.

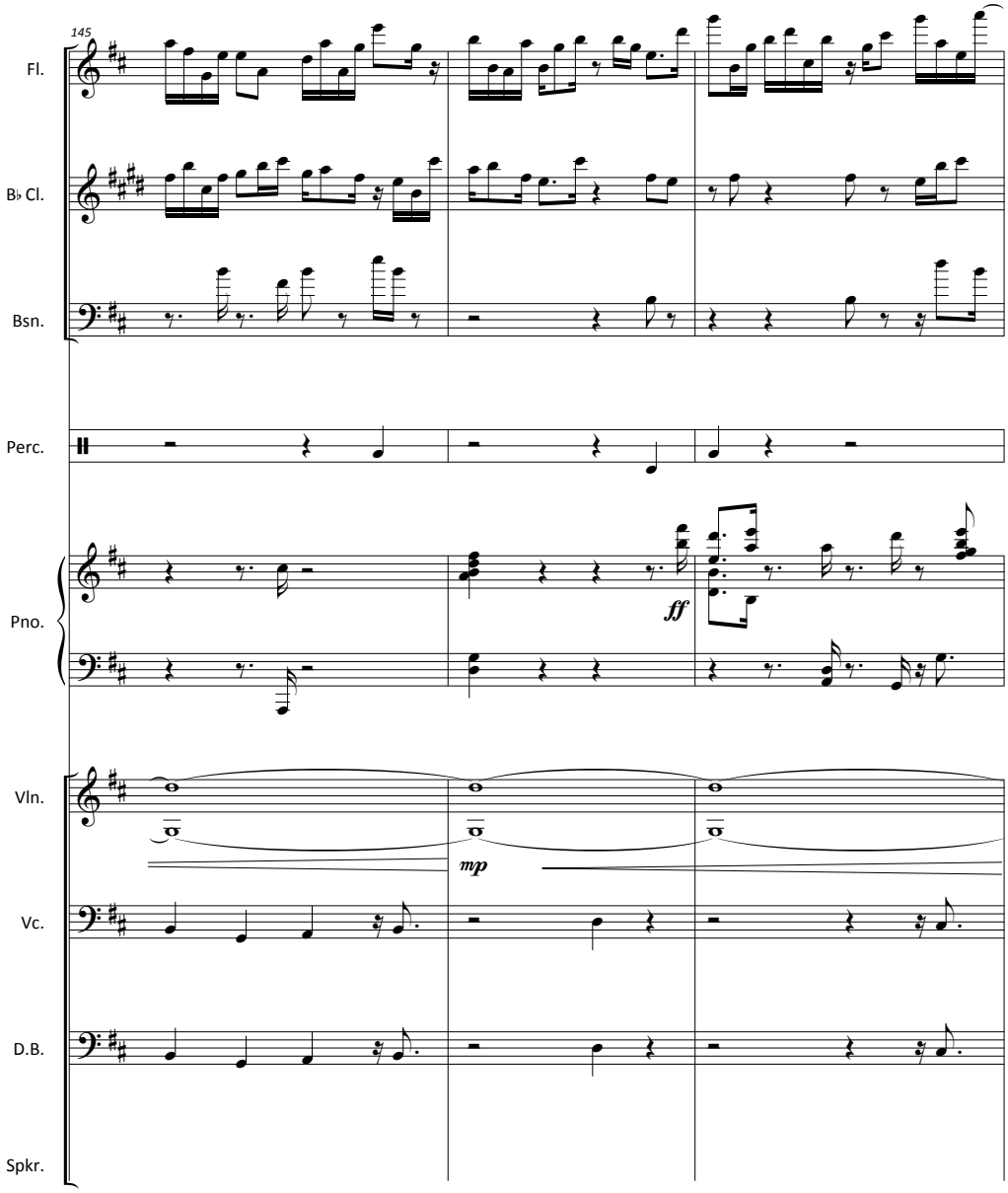

130
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
f
pizz.
f

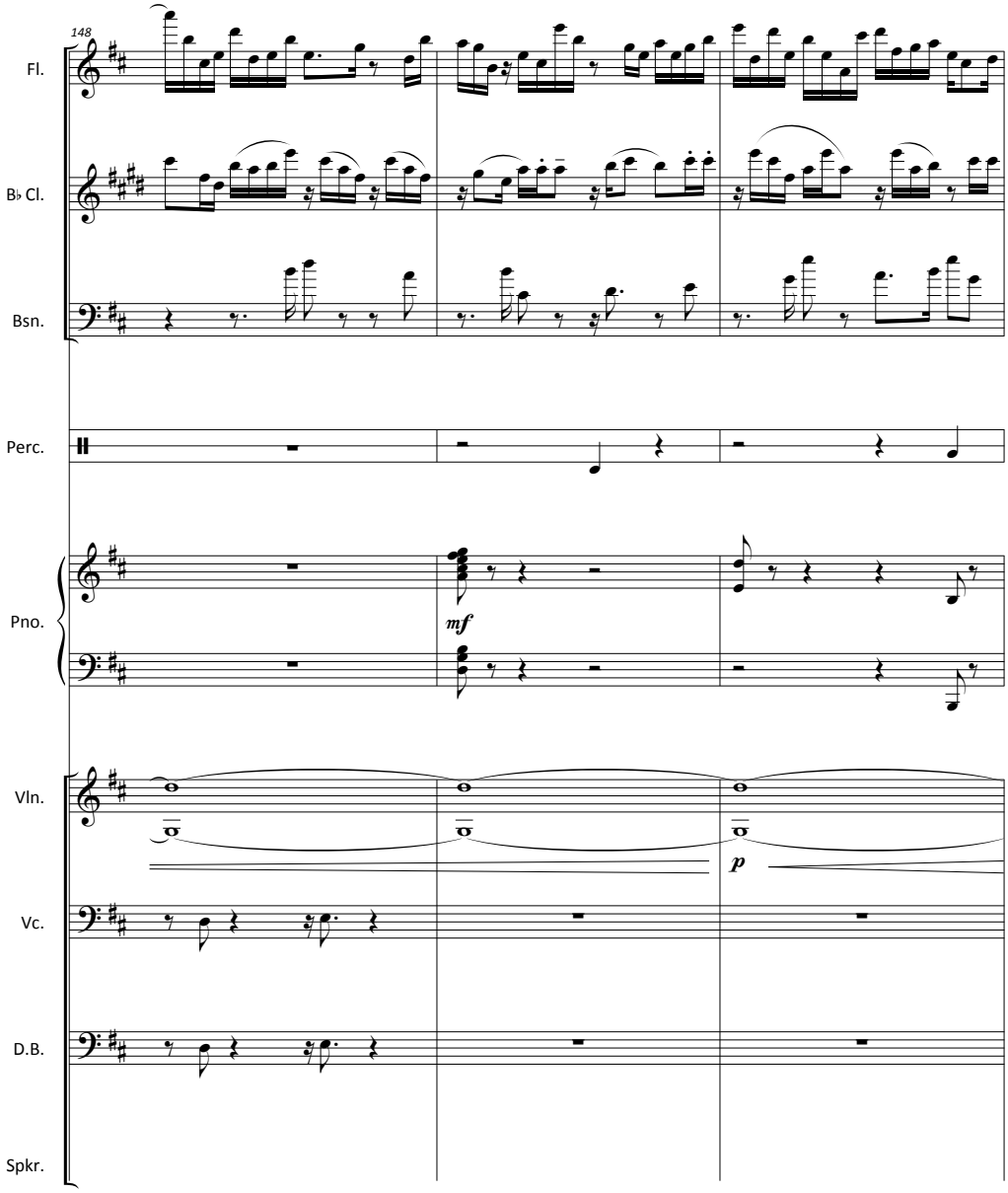

4. Corpus
F
delicately
Fl.
mf
delicately
B♭ Cl.
mf
delicately
Bsn.
mf
Perc.
Pno.
mf
sul D
Vln.
mf
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

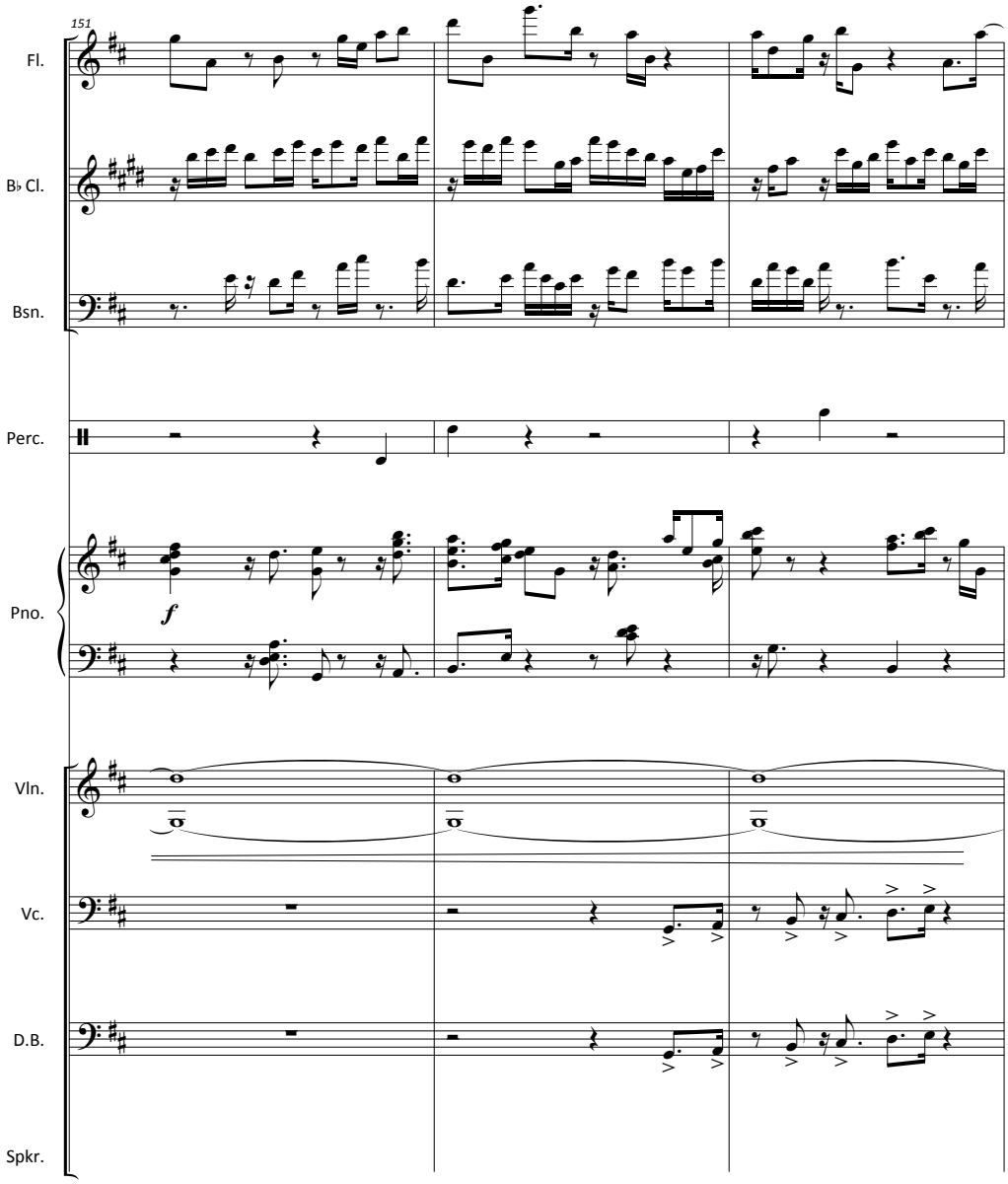

136
Fl.
mp
B♭ Cl.
mp
Bsn.
mp
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
mf
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

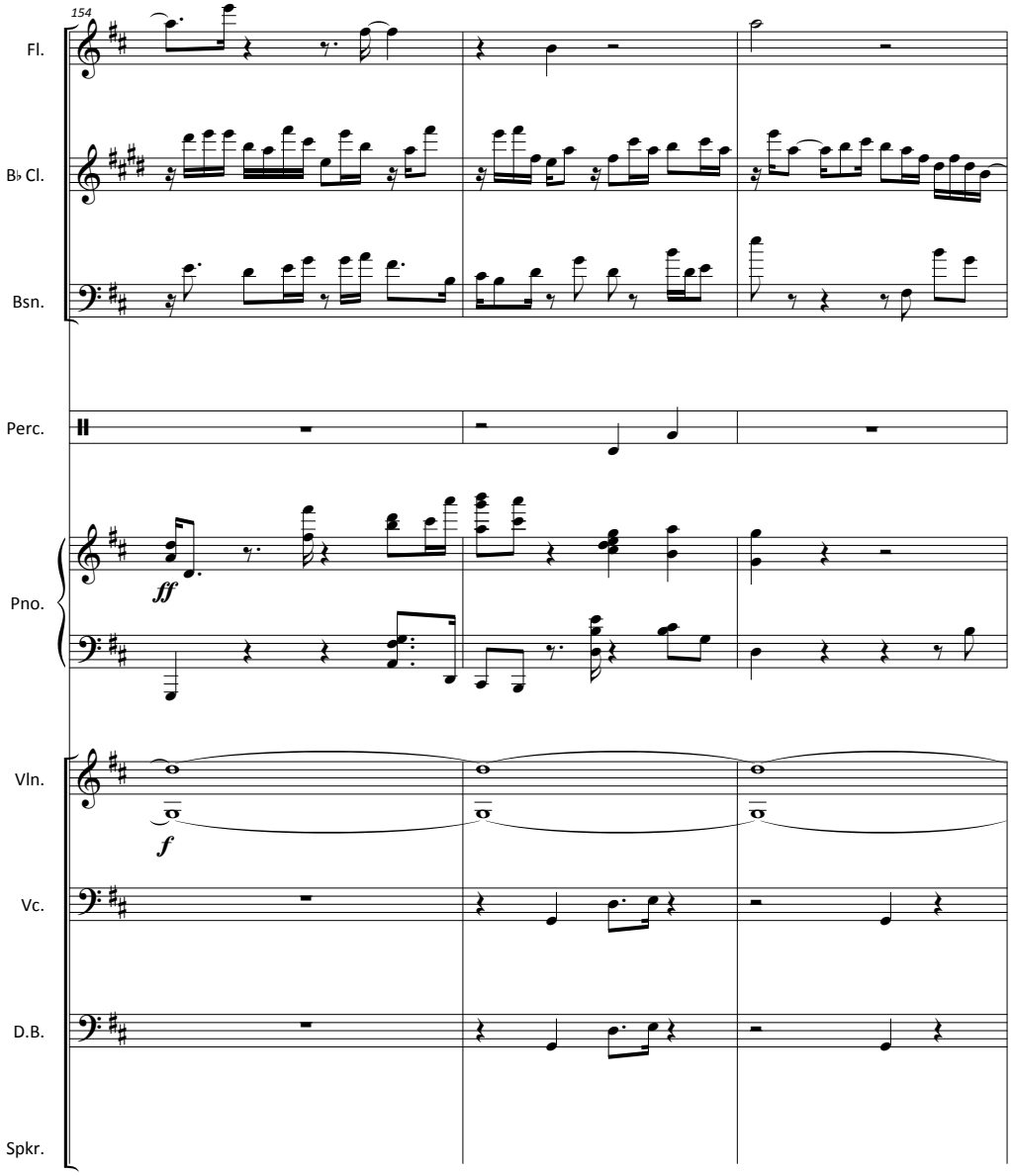

139
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
f
ff
ff

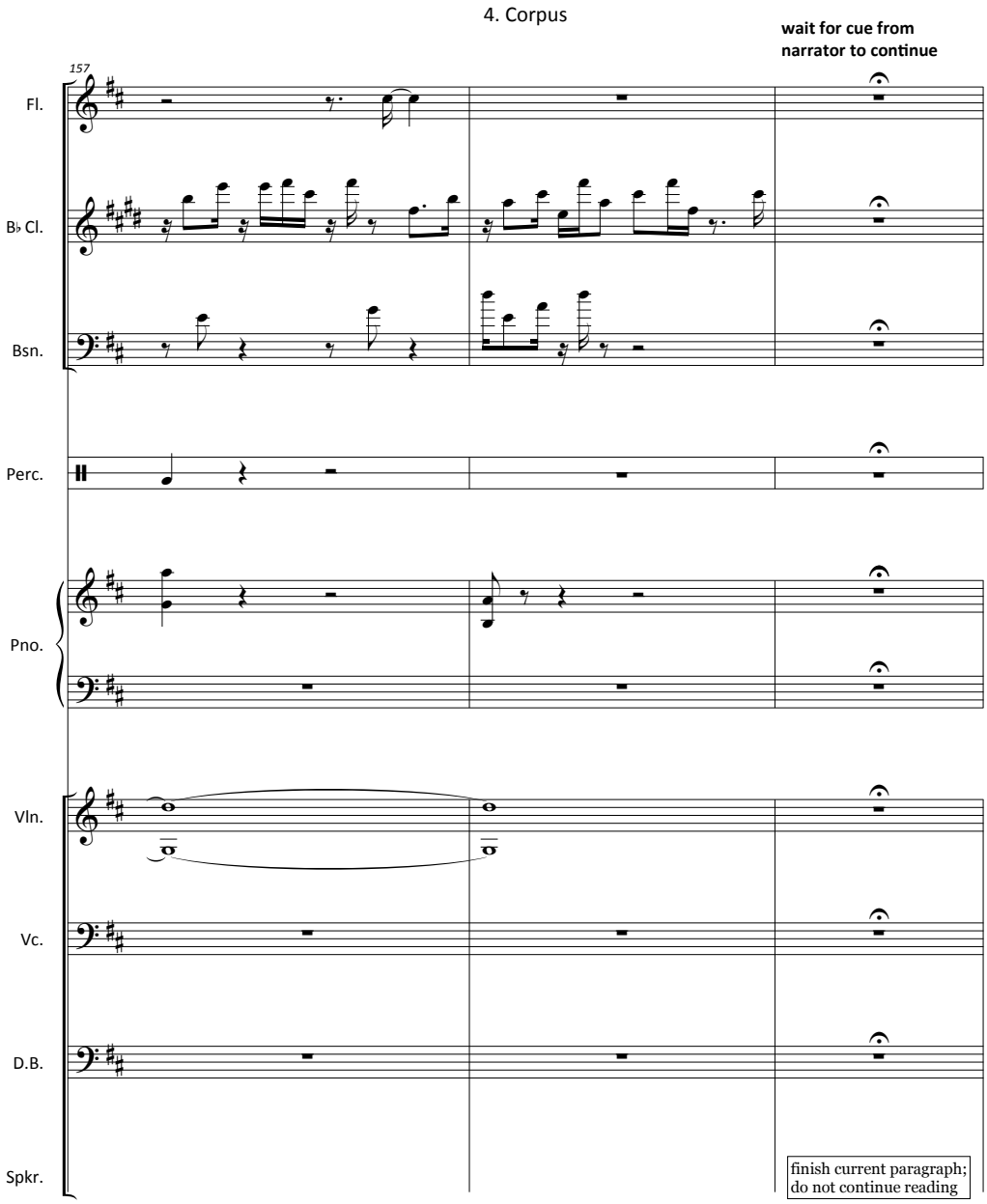

142
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
mf
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

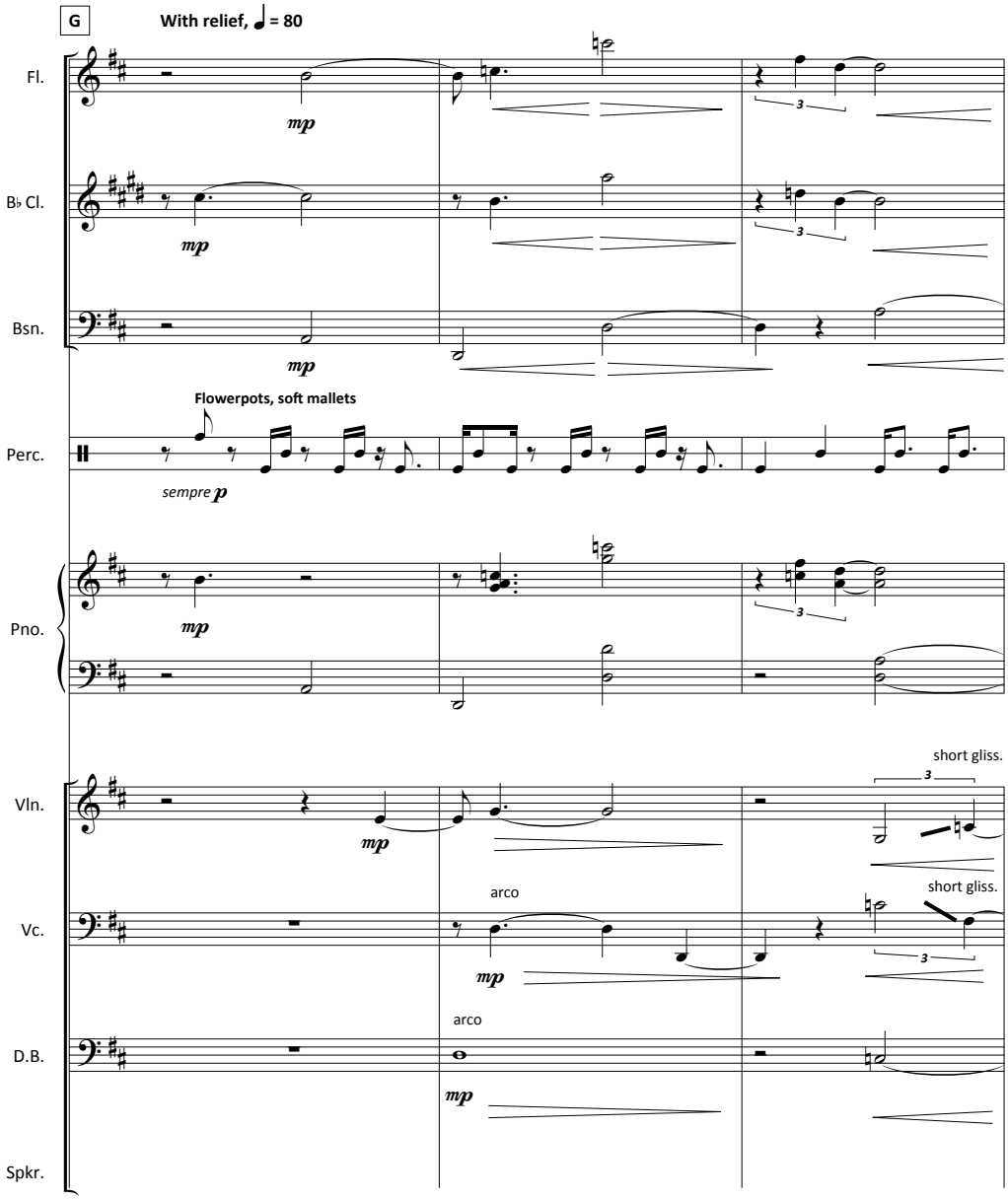

145
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
ff
Vln.
mp
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

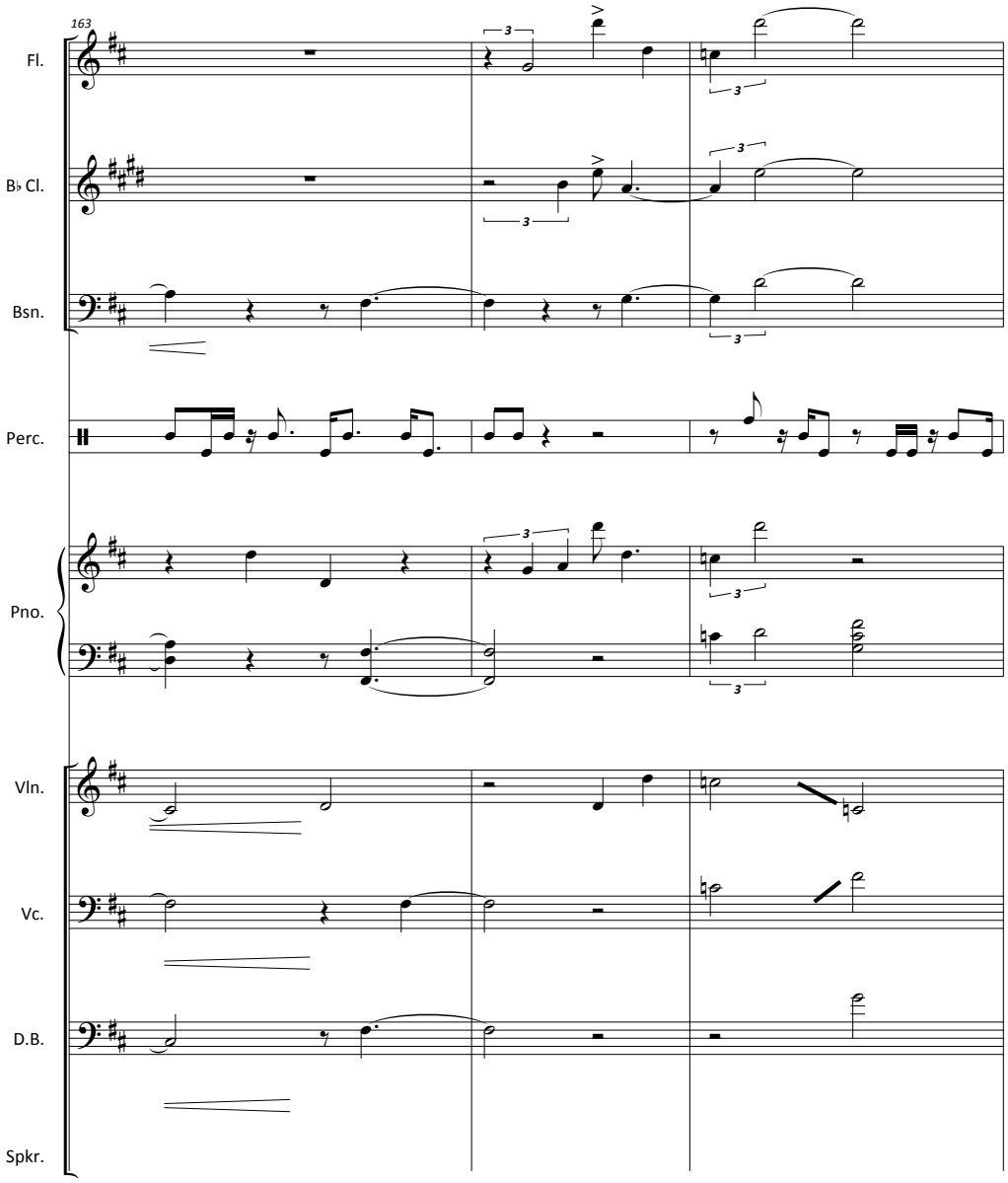

148
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
mf
Vln.
p
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

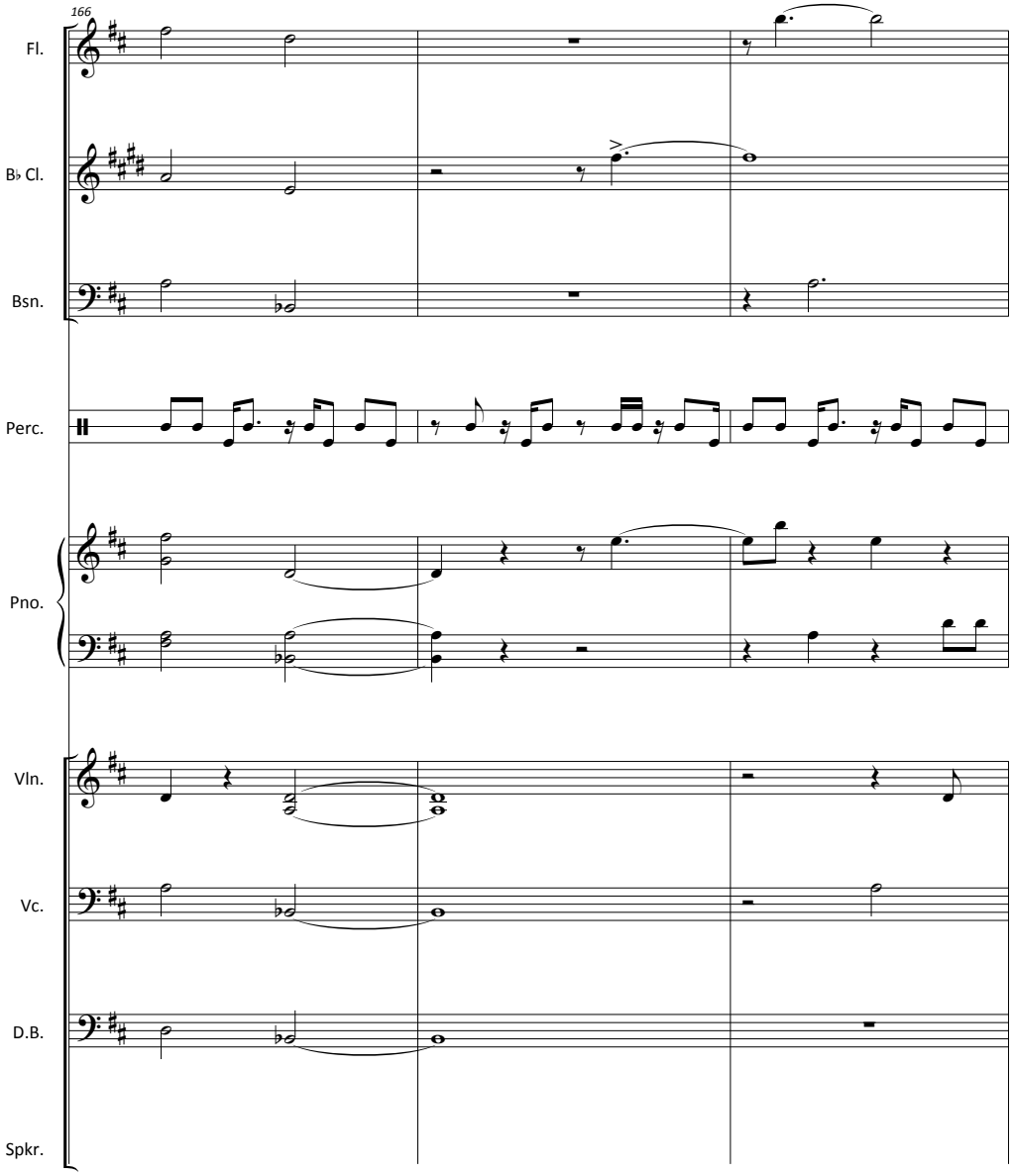

151
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
f
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

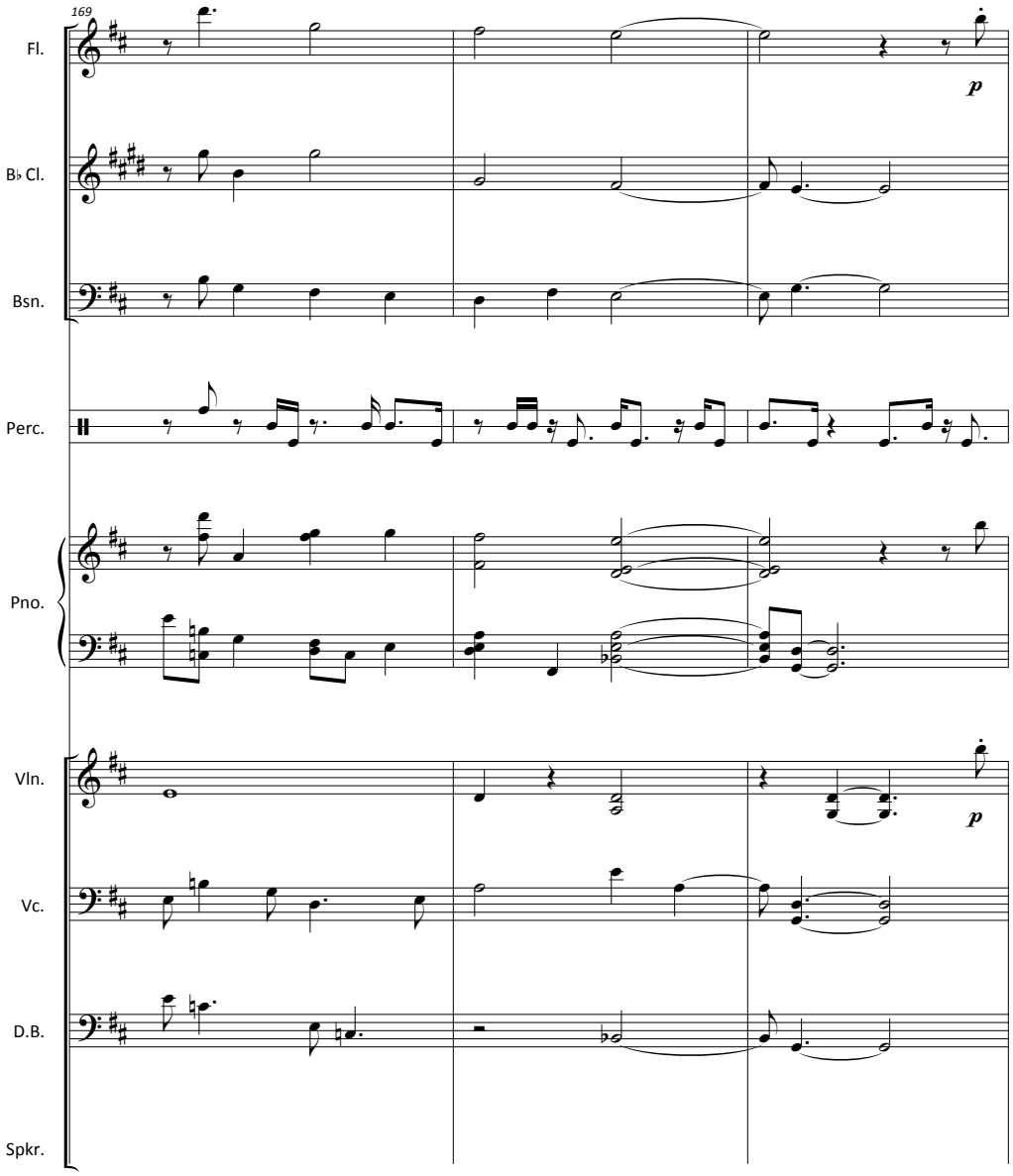

154
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
ff
Vln.
f
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

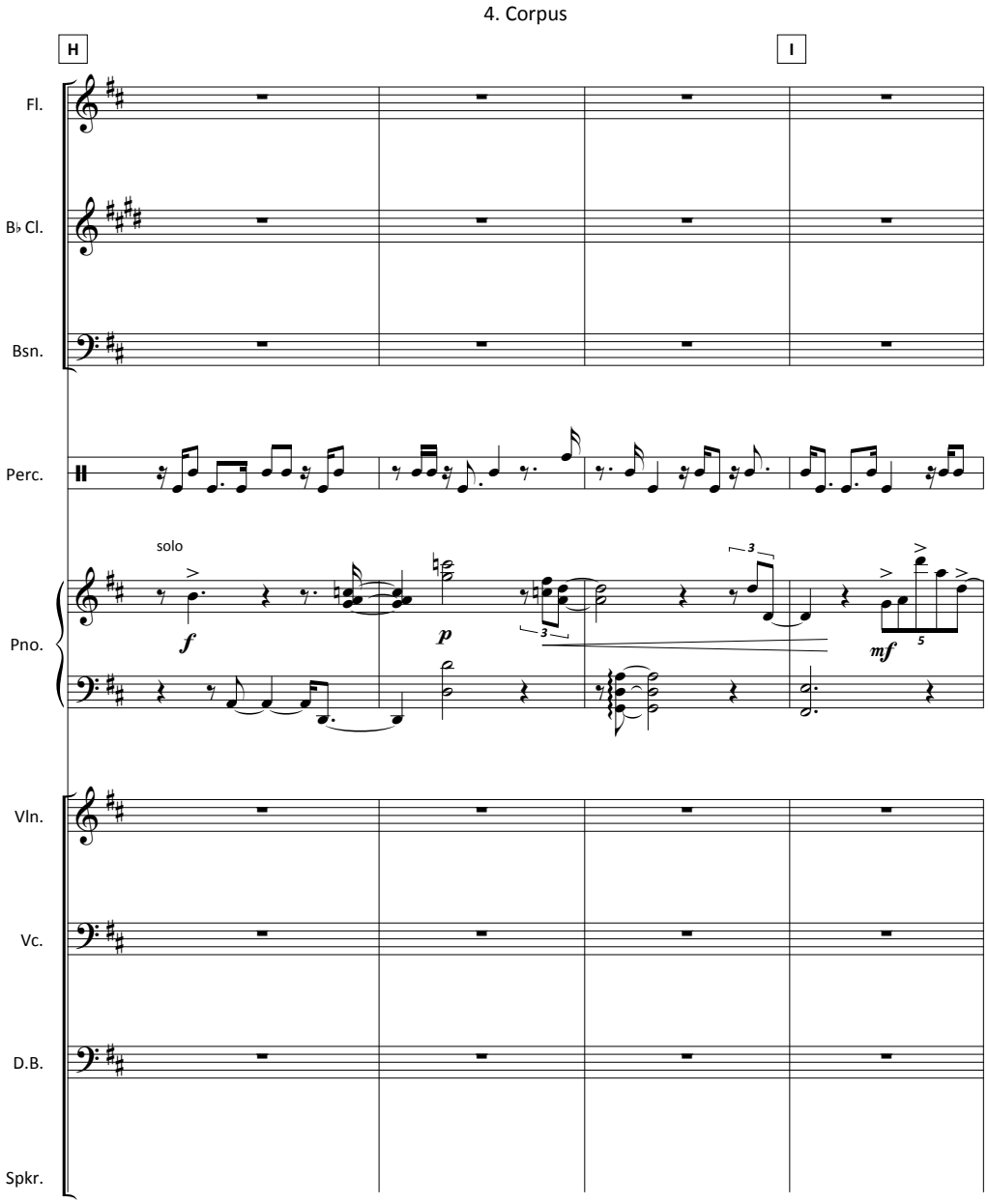

4. Corpus
wait for cue from
narrator to continue
157
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
finish current paragraph;
do not continue reading

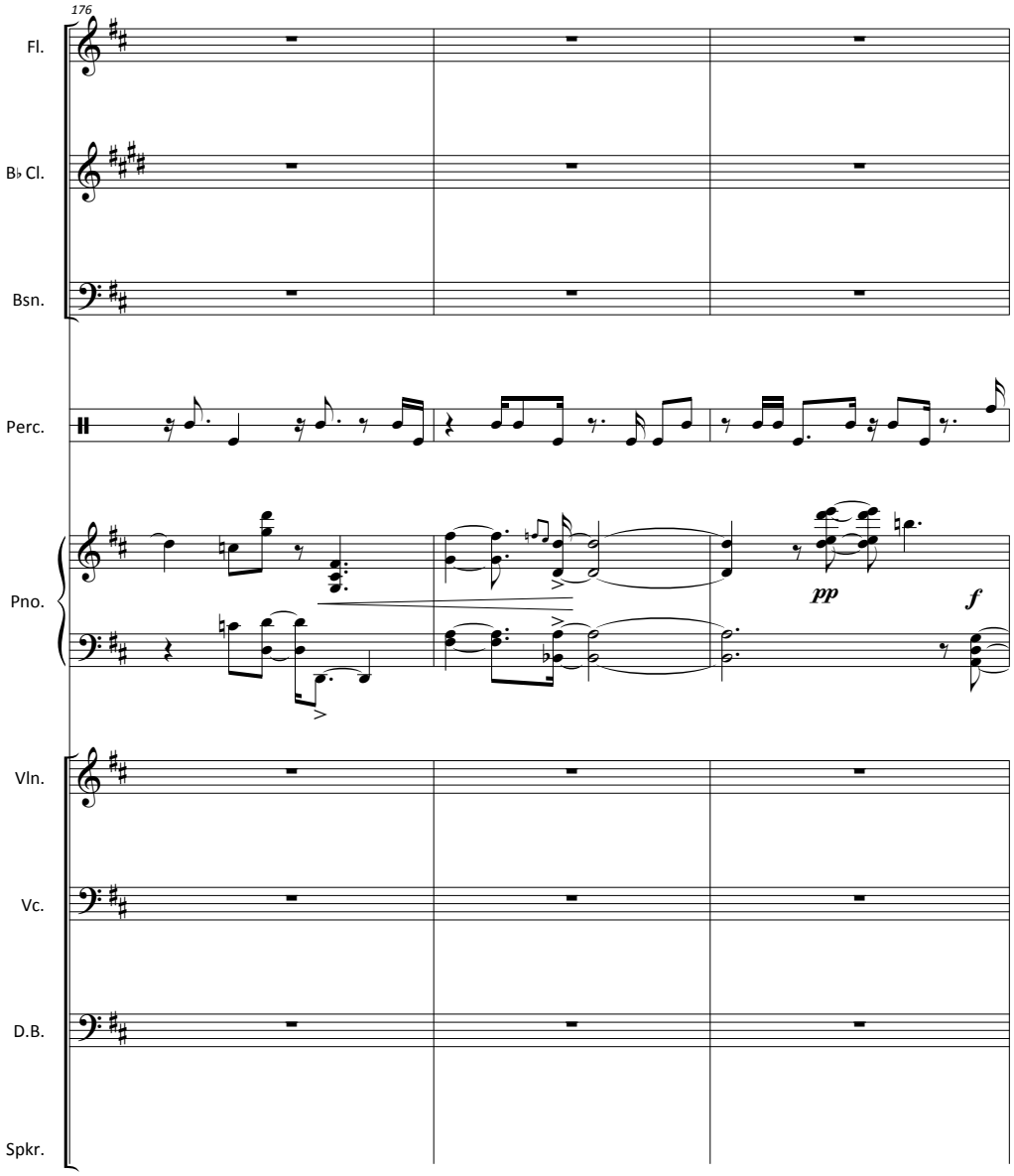

G
With relief, ♩ = 80
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Flowerpots, soft mallets
Perc.
sempre p
Pno.
short gliss.
Vln.
arco
short gliss.
Vc.
arco
D.B.
Spkr.

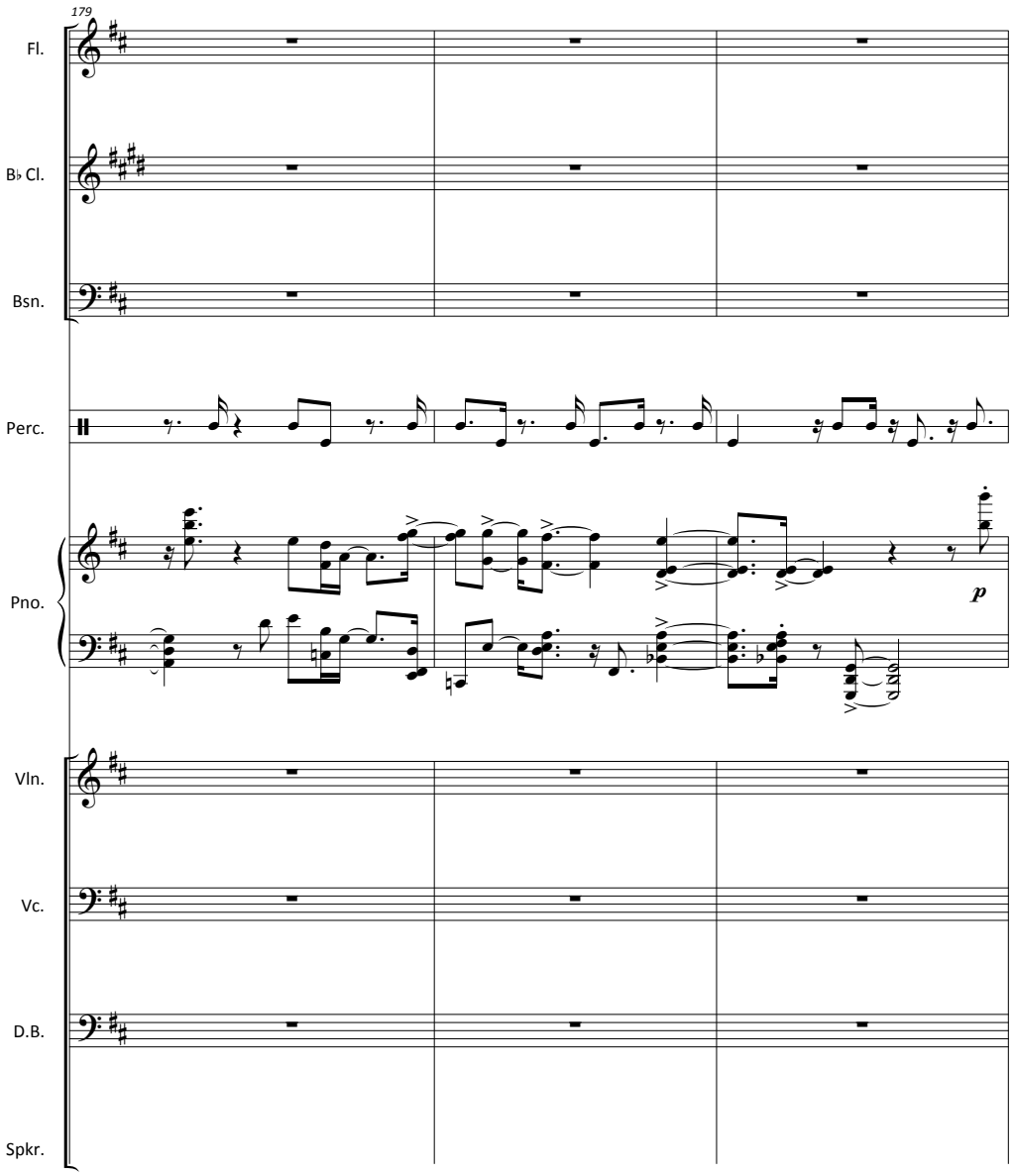

163
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

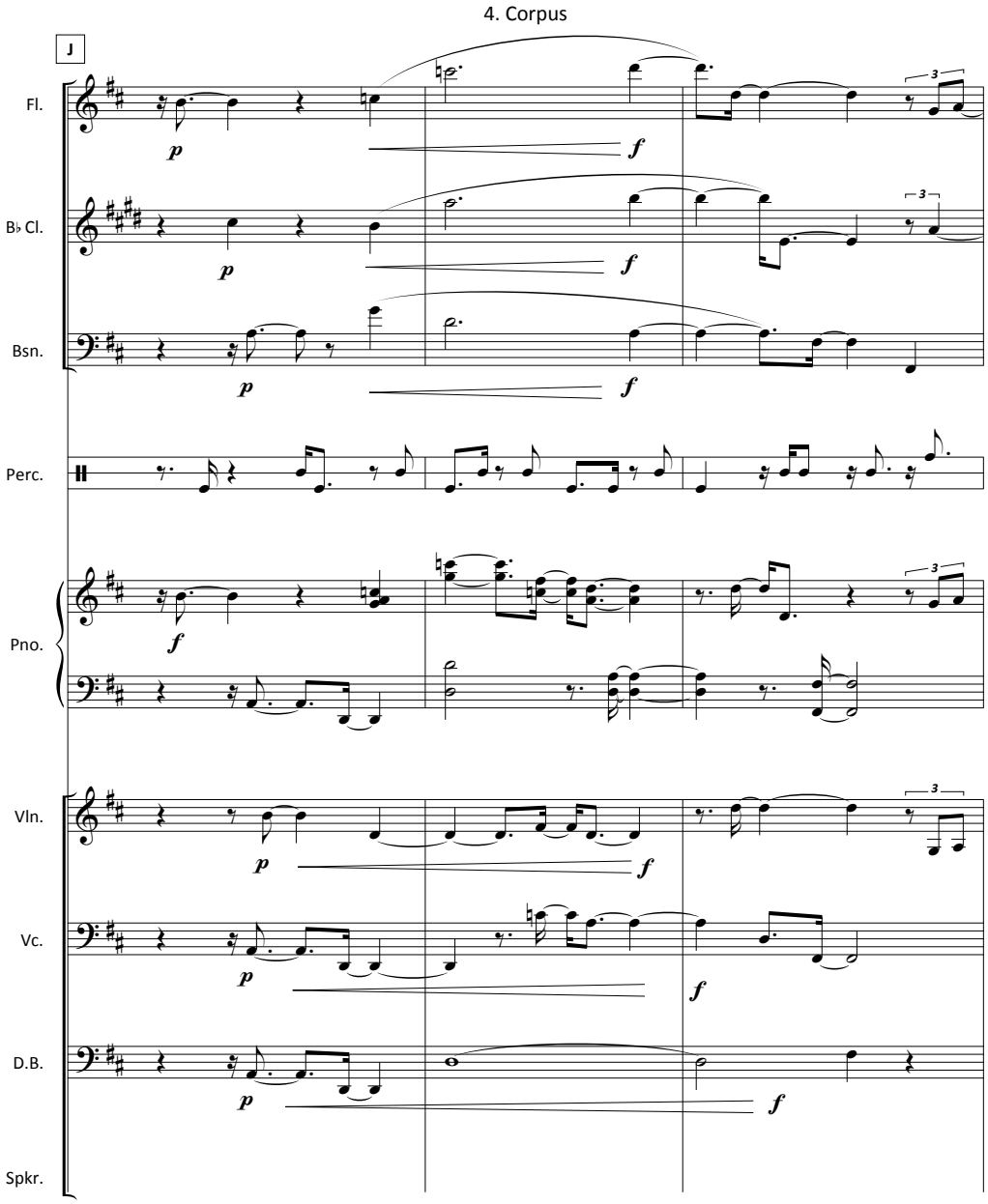

166
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

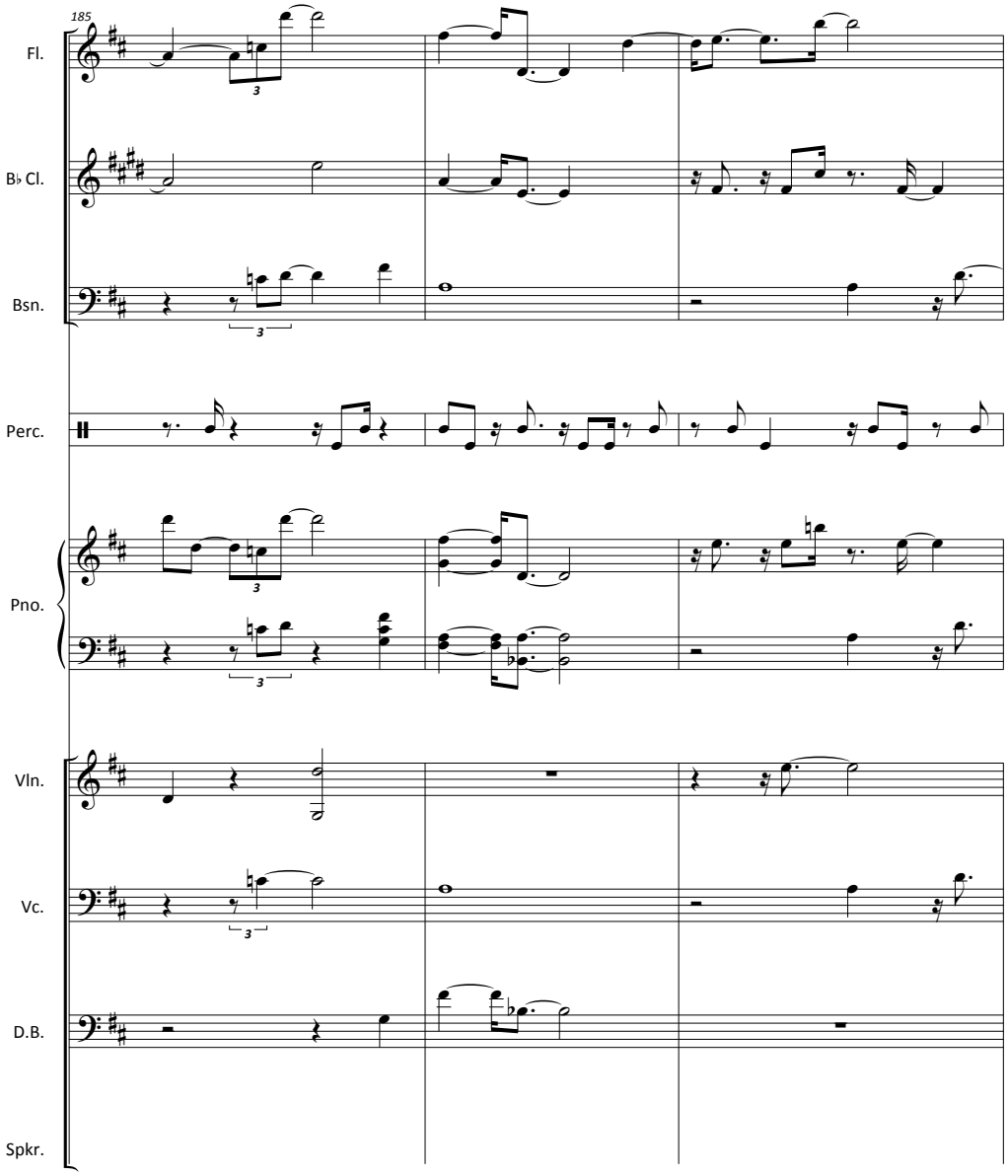

169
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p
p


4. Corpus
H
I
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
solo
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

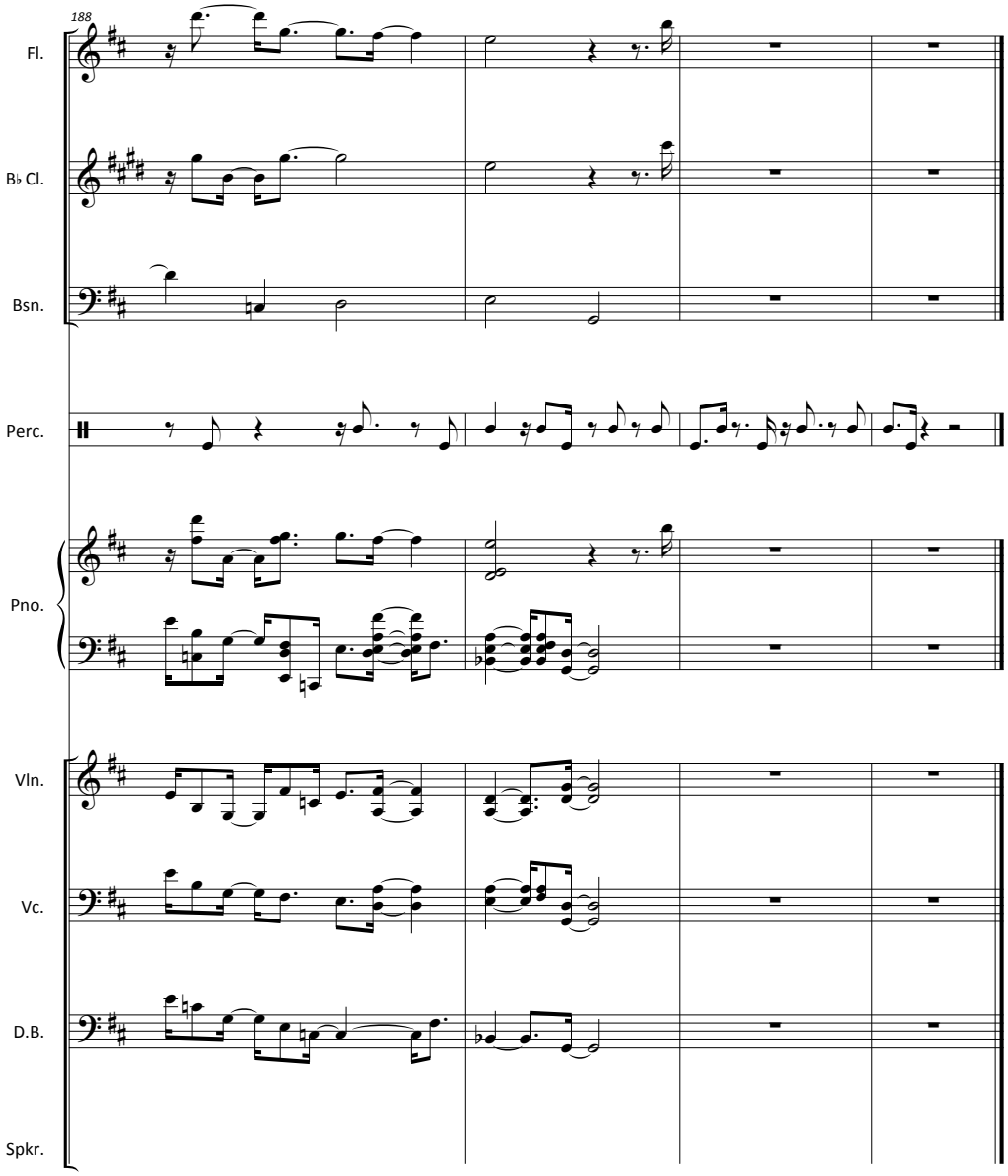

176
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
pp
f
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.


179
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p


4. Corpus
J
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p
f
3


185
Fl.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

4. Corpus

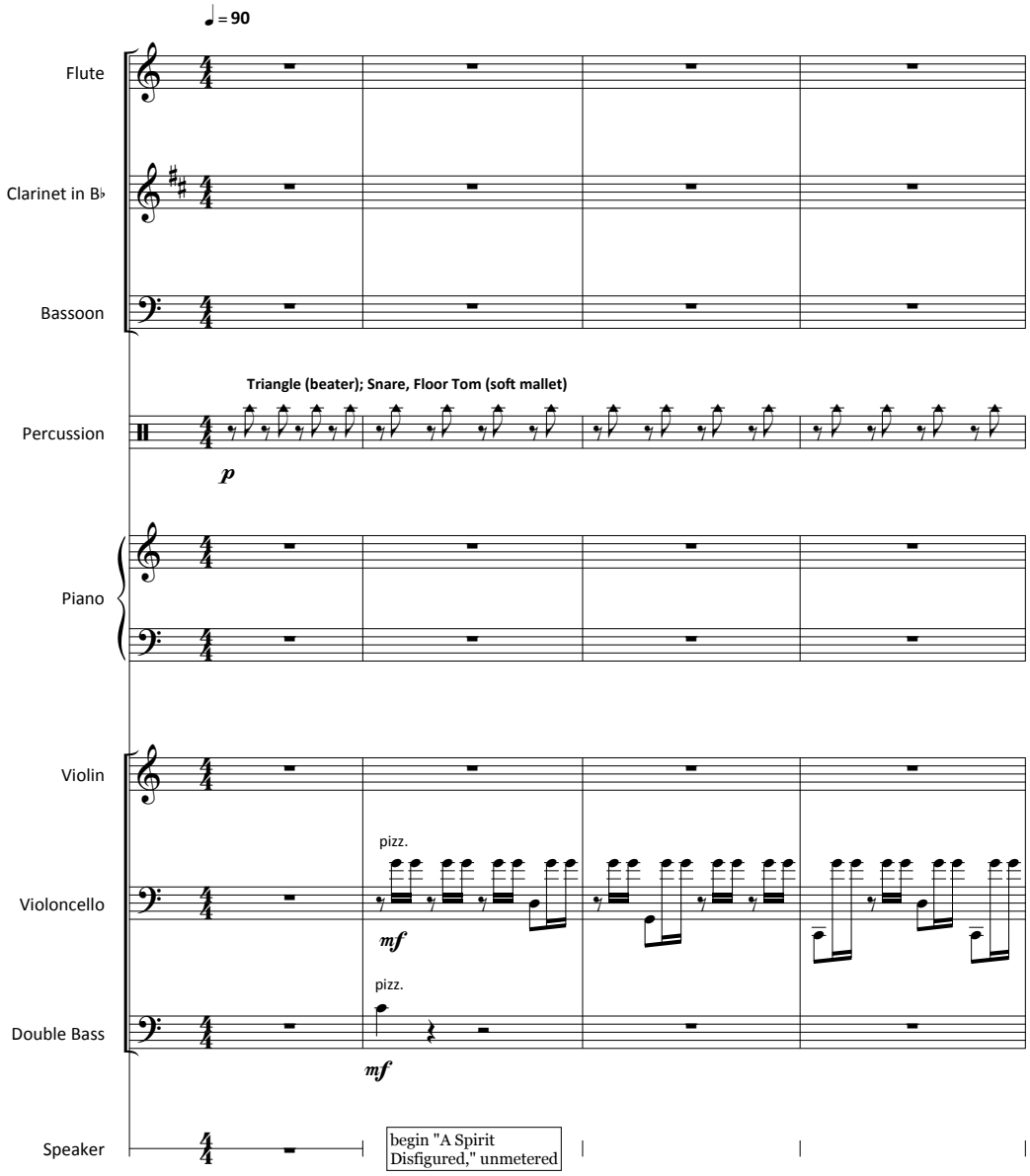


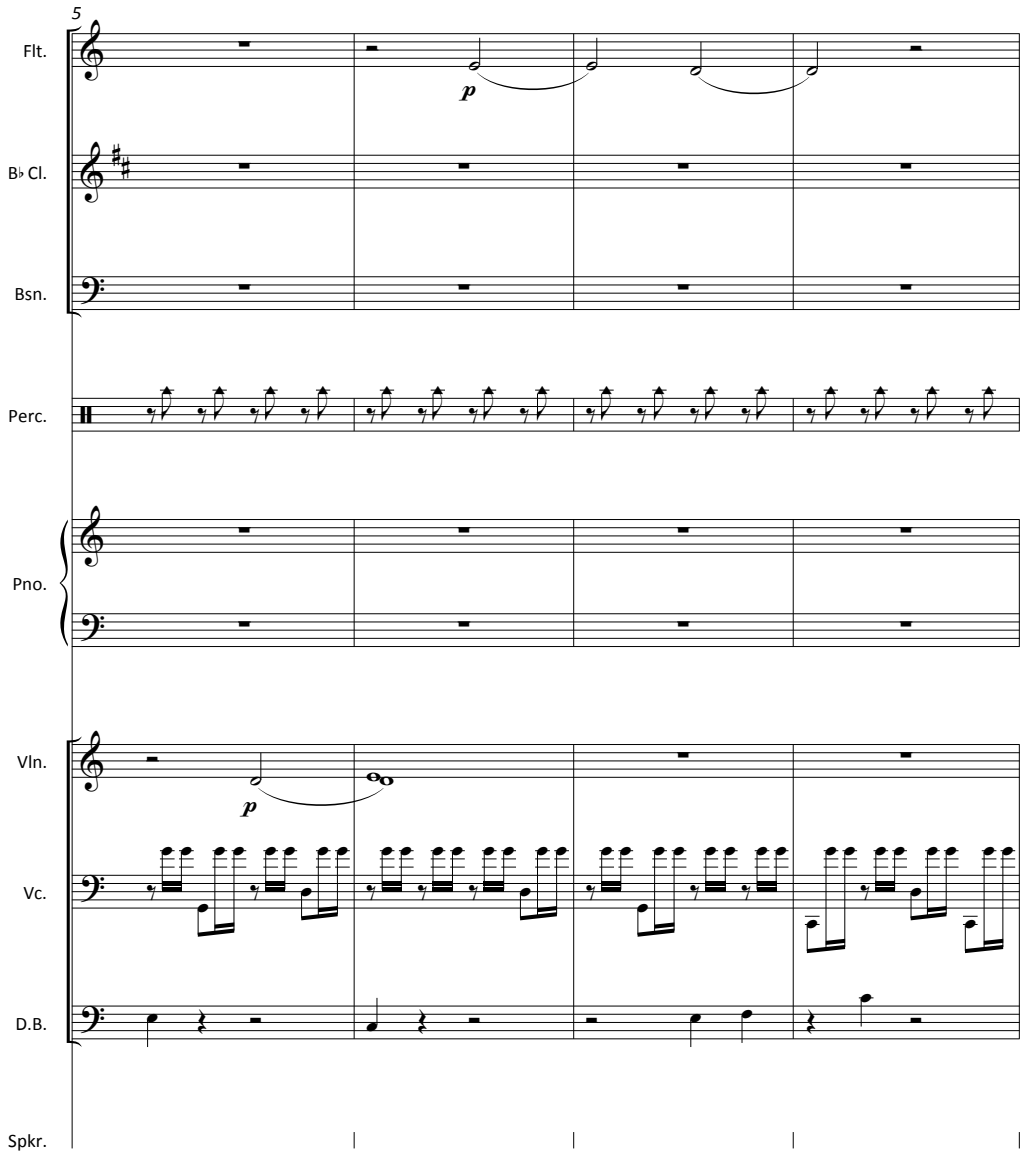
5. Bolus

laptop solo; all others tacet.

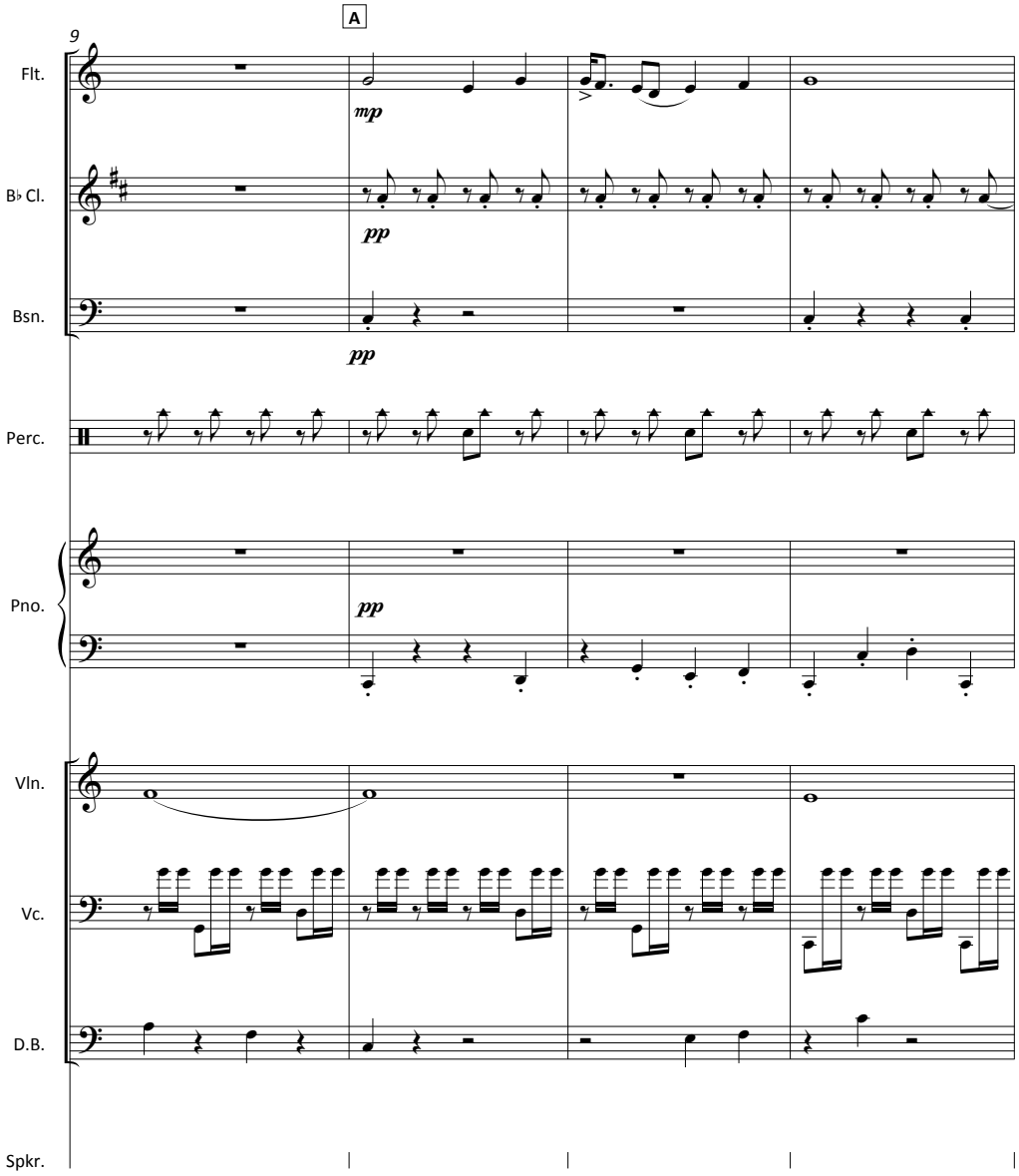
6. Finale:

A Spirit Disfigured

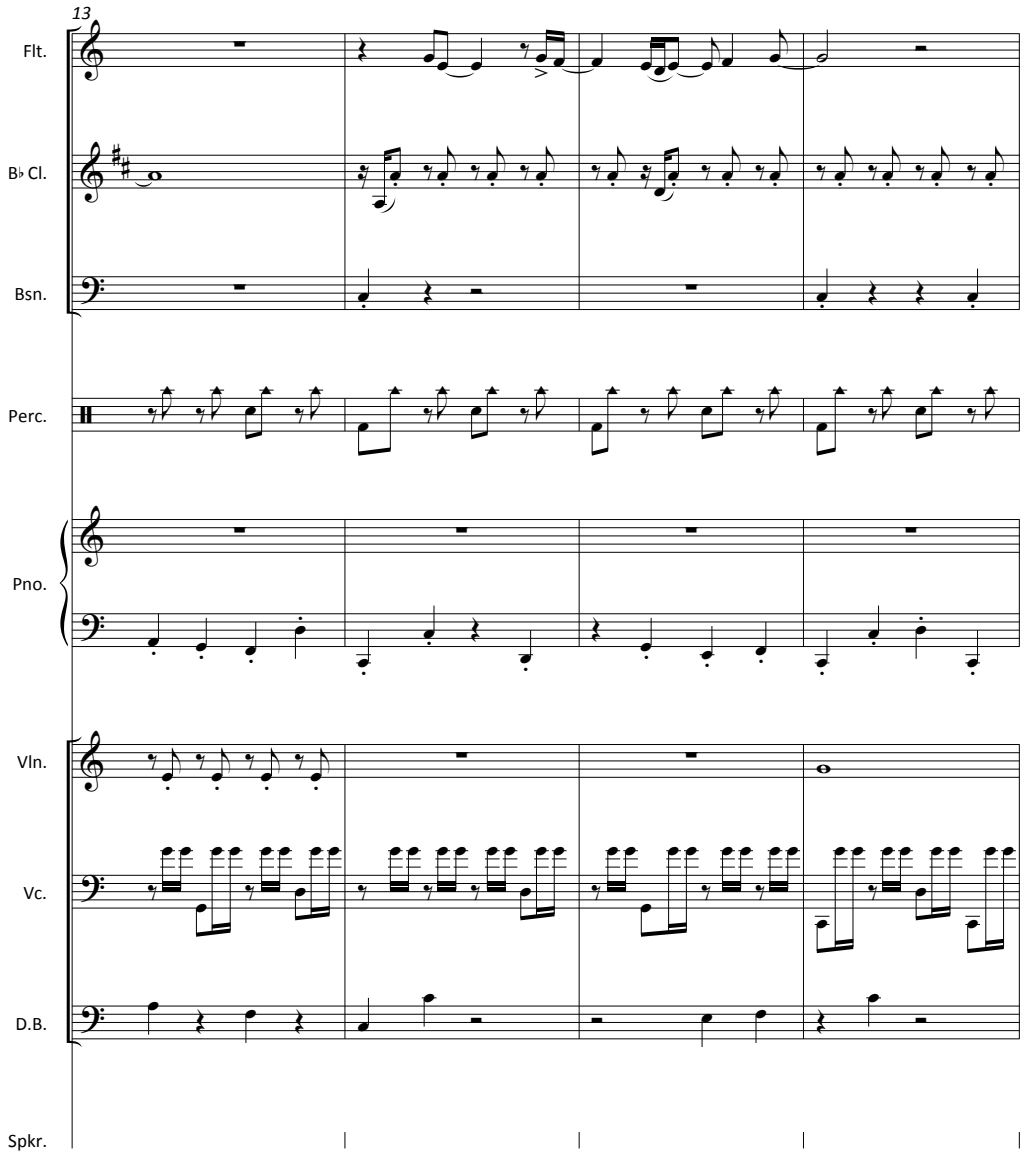


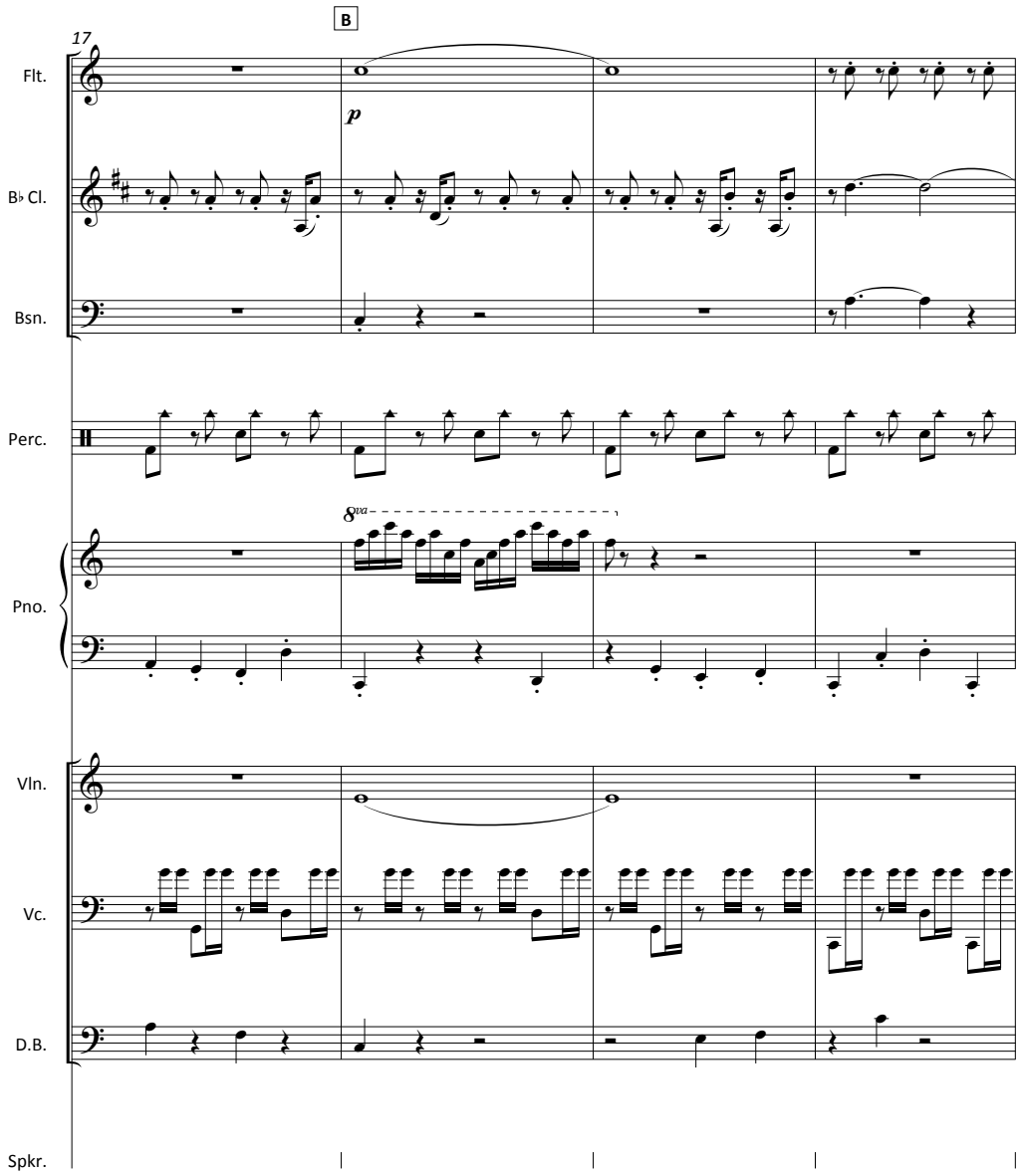

5
Flt.
p
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
p
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.

6. Finale

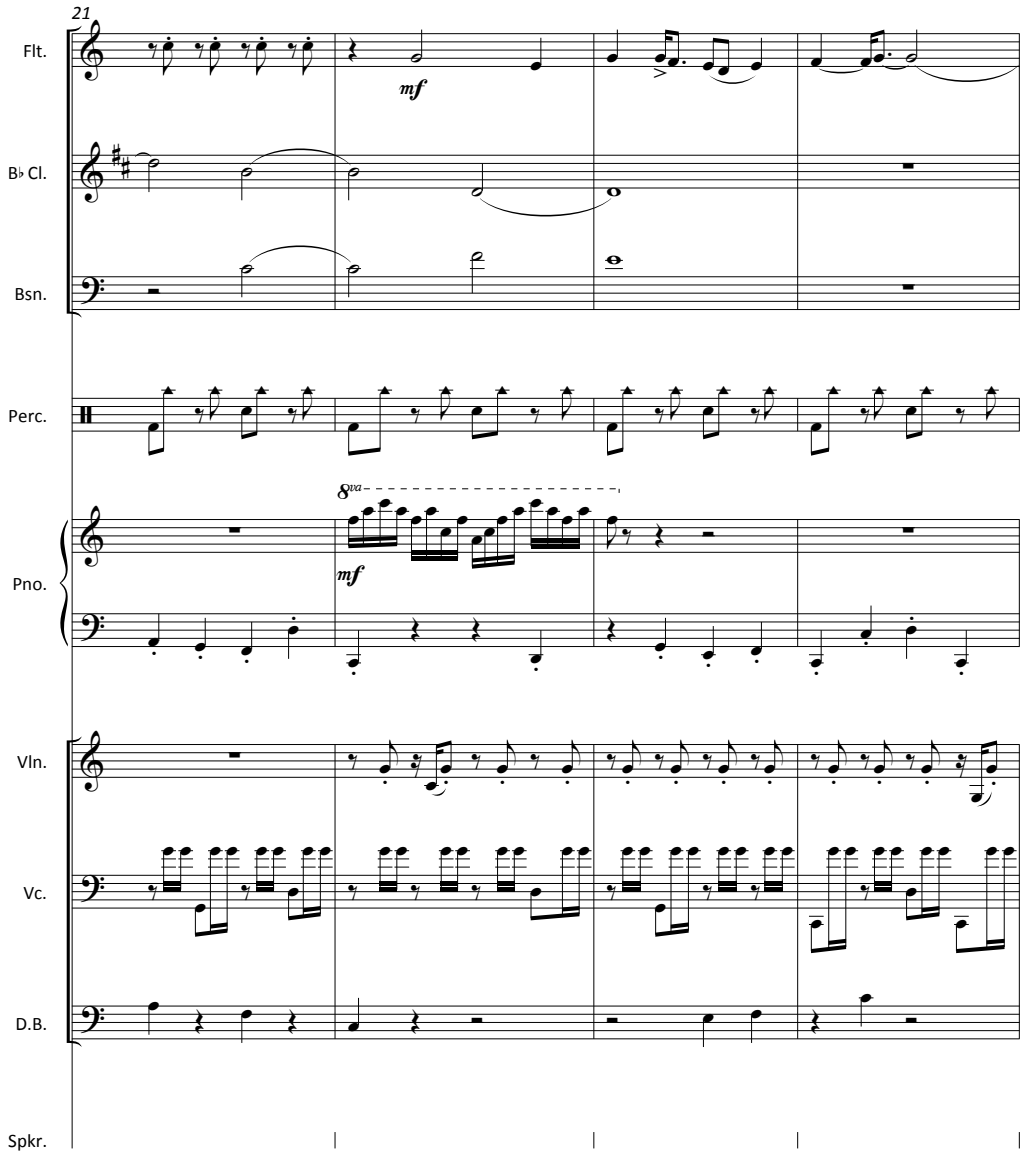


6. Finale

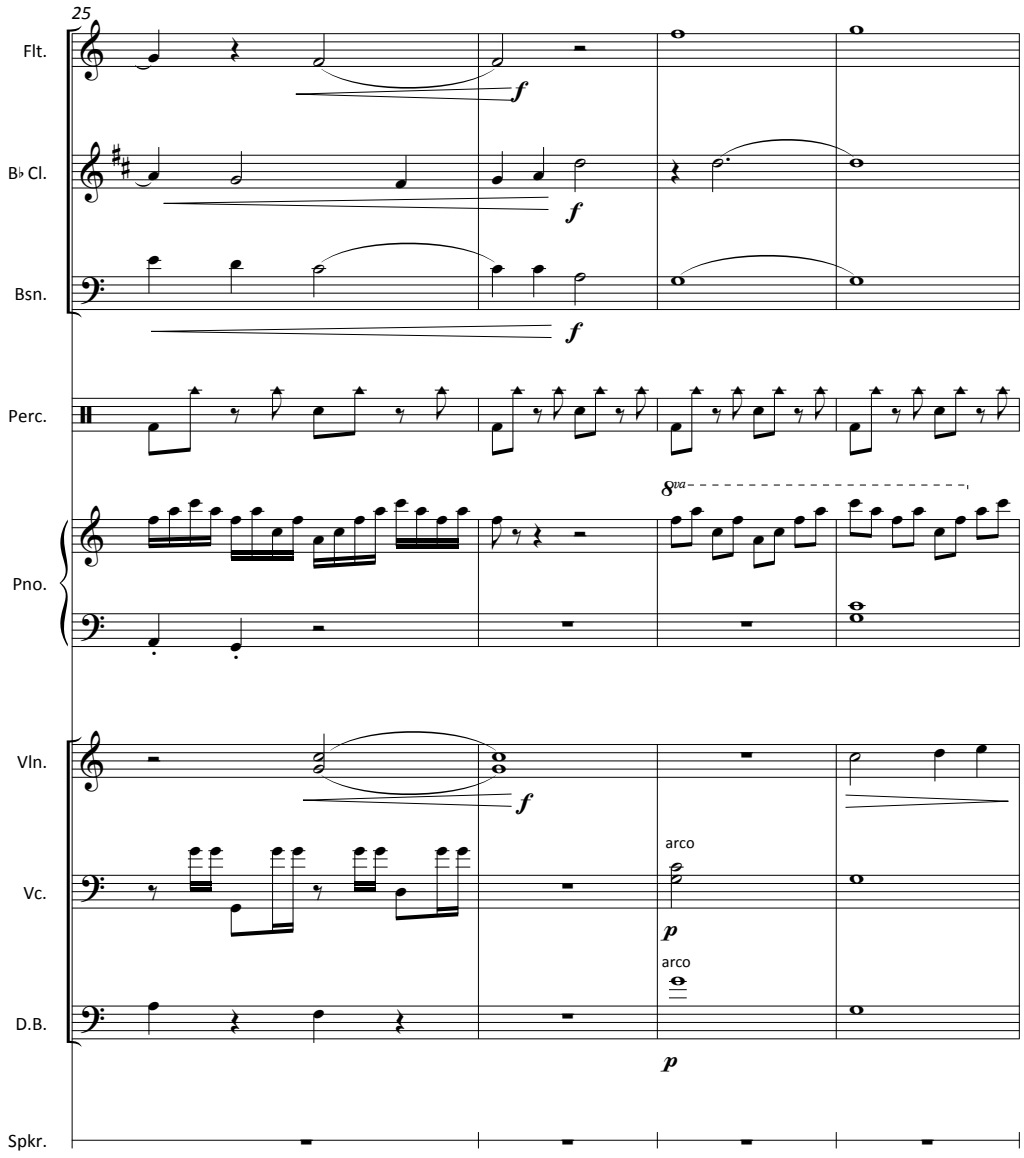



B
17
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
8va
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p

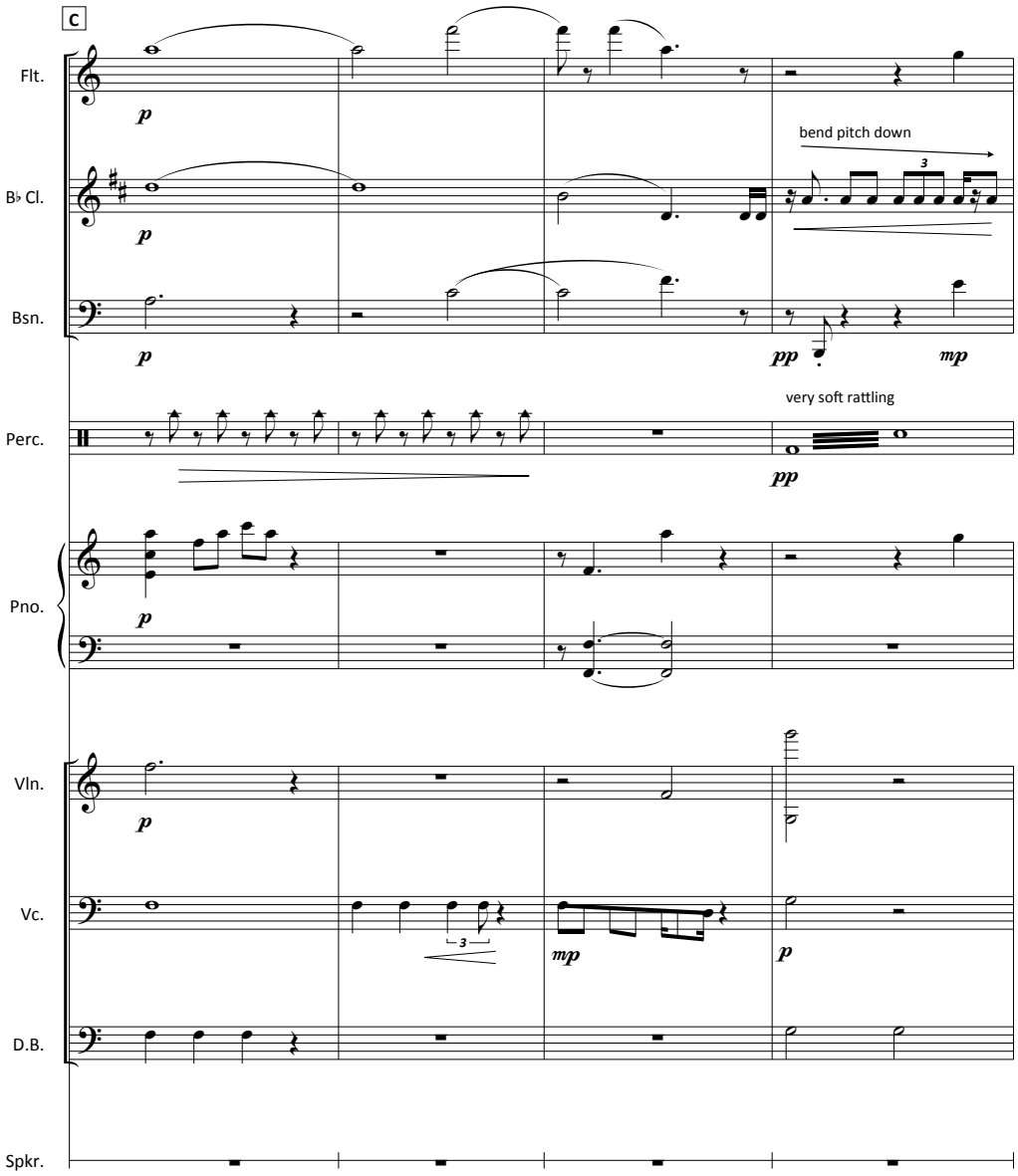
6. Finale



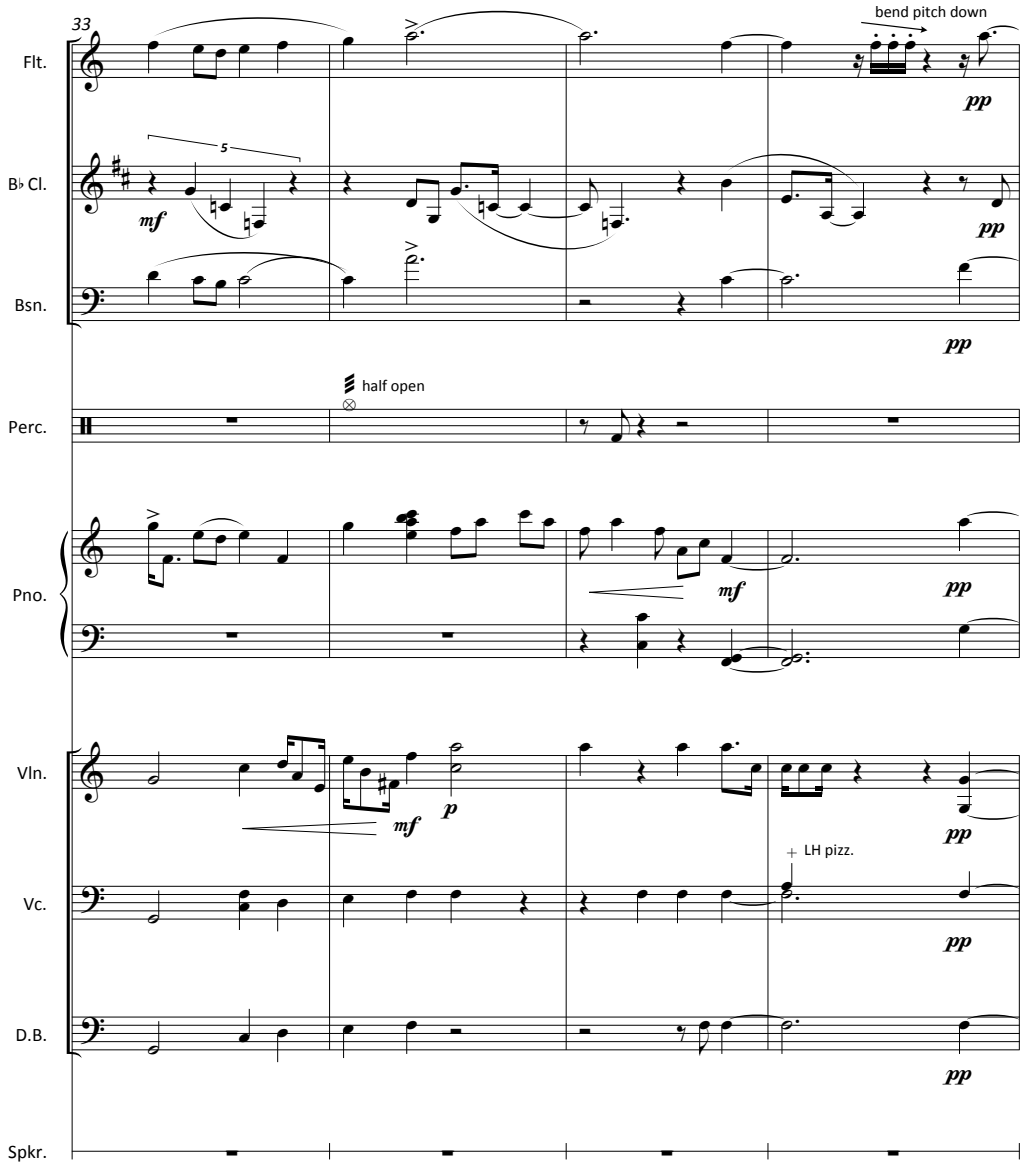
6. Finale

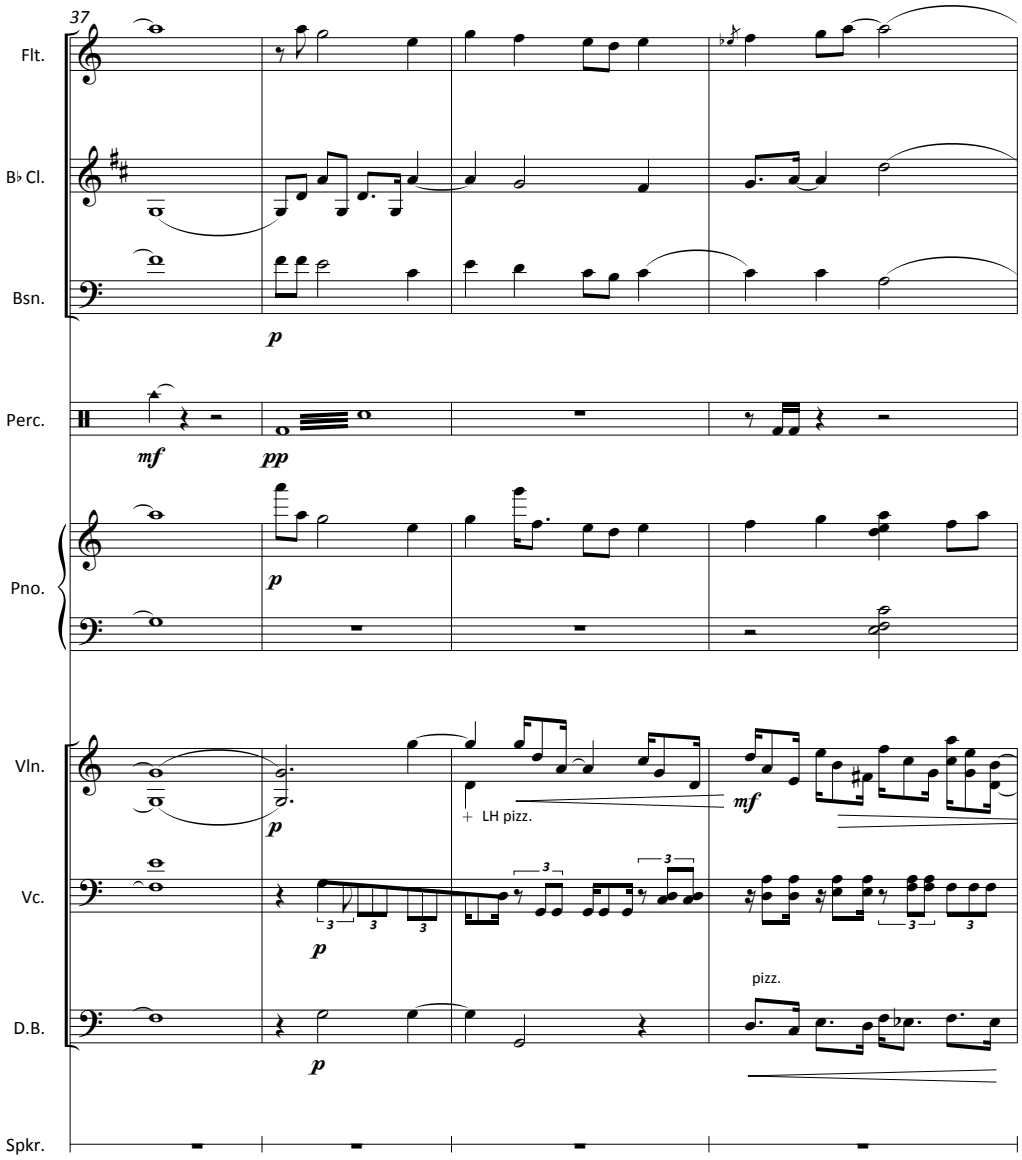


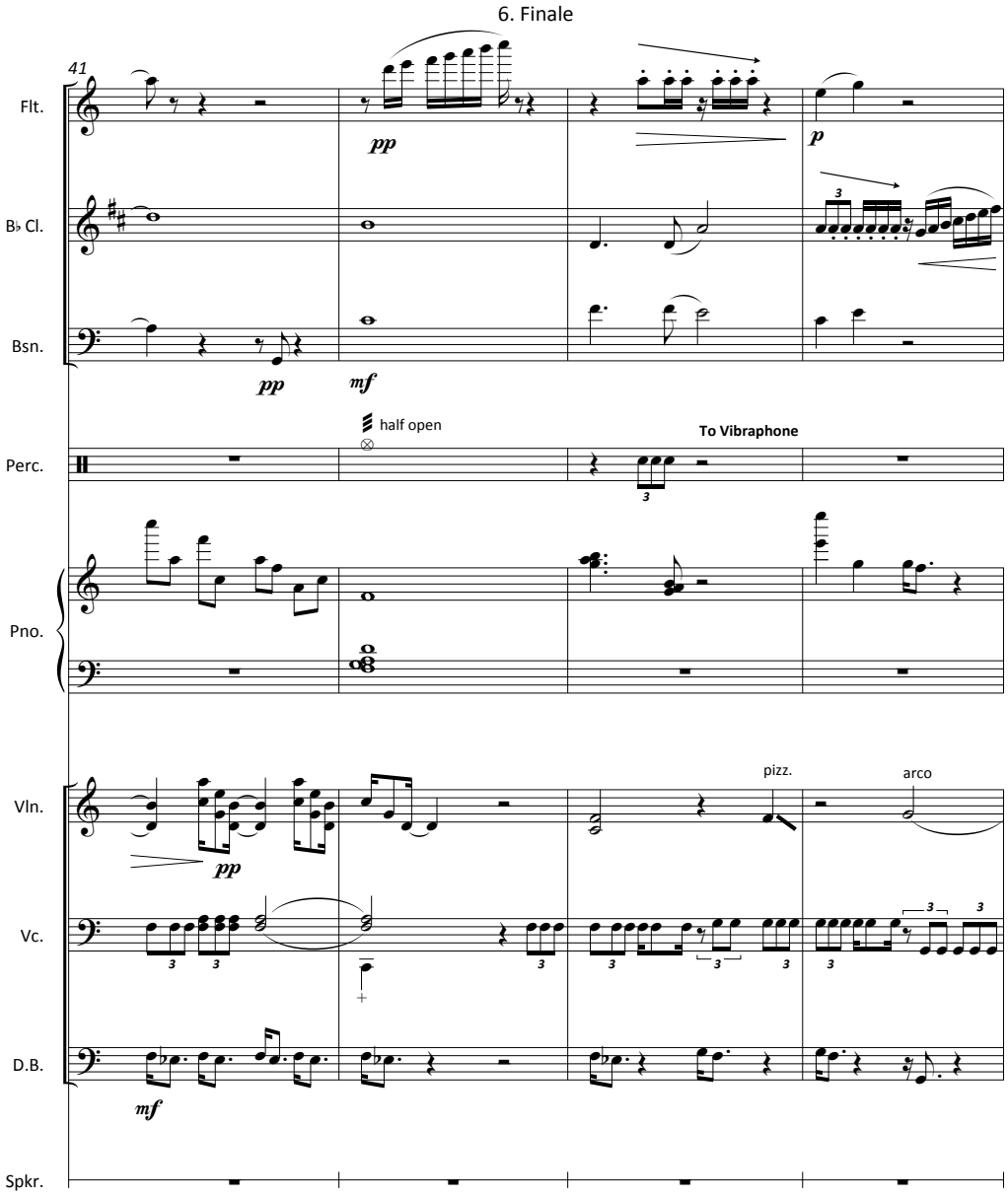
6. Finale


C
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
bend pitch down
very soft rattling
p
pp
mp

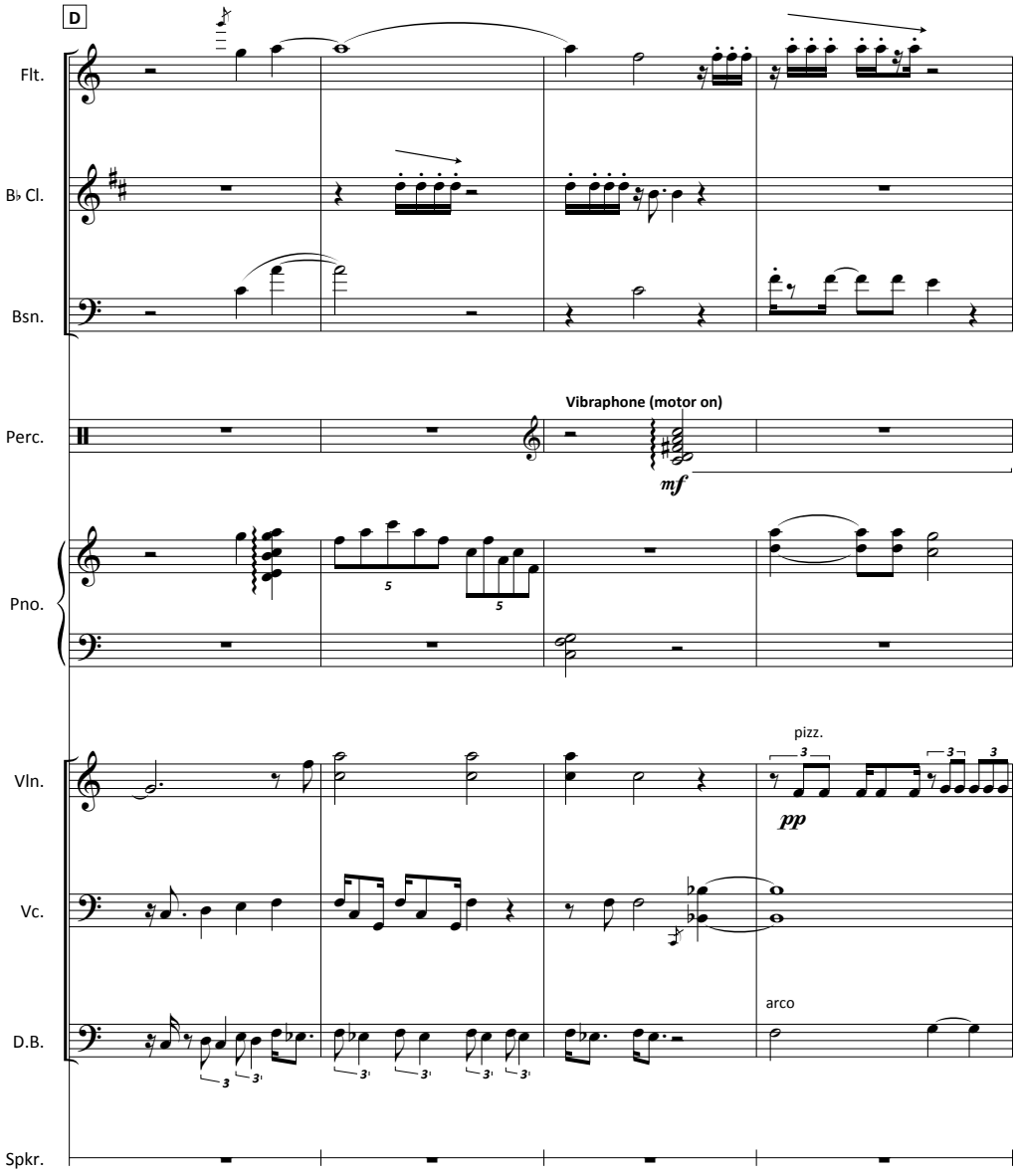
6. Finale


33
bend pitch down
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
half open
LH pizz.
mf
pp
p

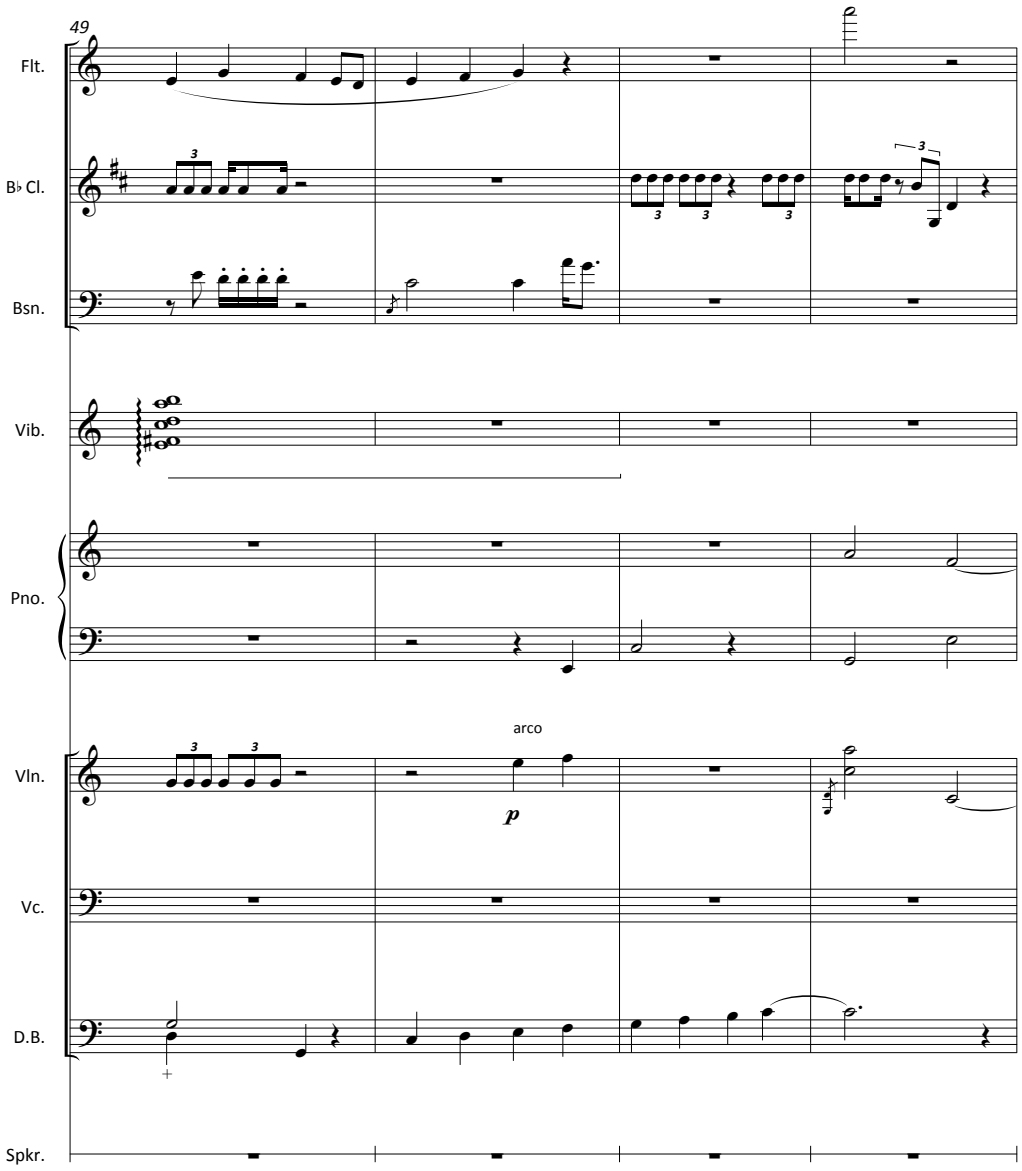

37
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
p
Perc.
mf
pp
Pno.
p
Vln.
p
+ LH pizz.
mf
Vc.
p
pizz.
D.B.
p
Spkr.


6. Finale
41
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
pp
p
mf
half open
To Vibraphone
pizz.
arco

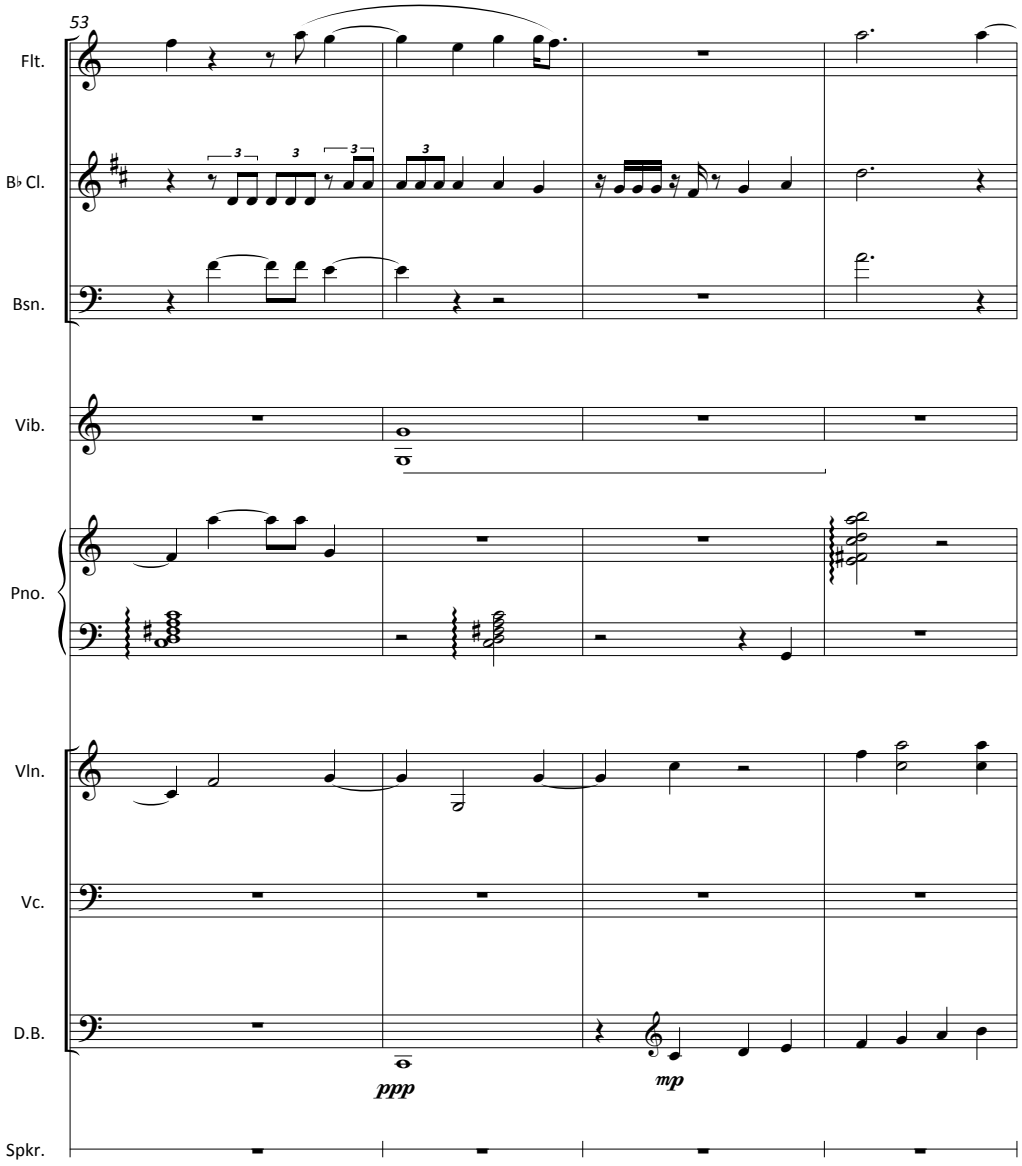
6. Finale

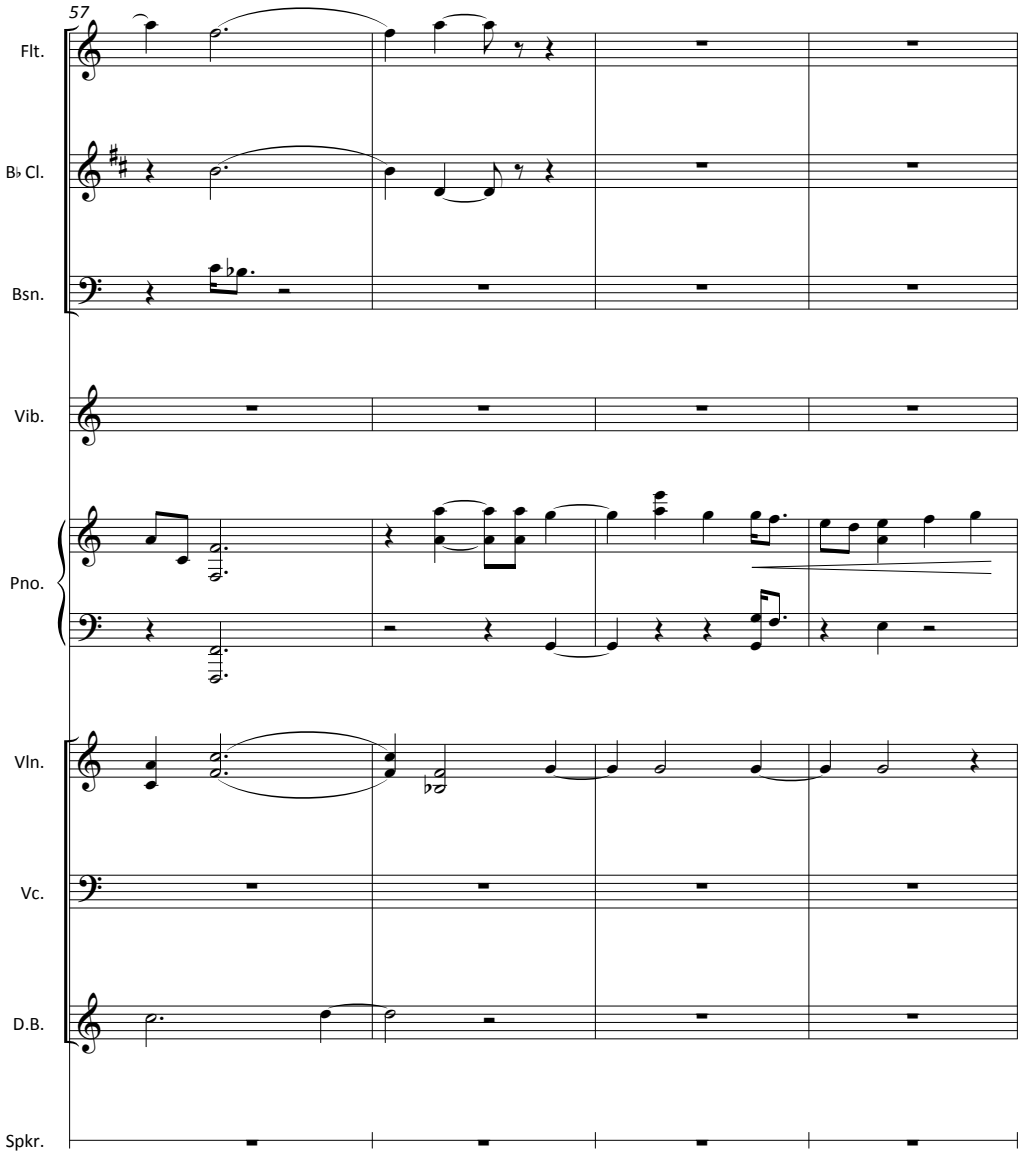

D
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Perc.
Vibraphone (motor on)
mf
Pno.
Vln.
pizz.
pp
Vc.
D.B.
arco
Spkr.

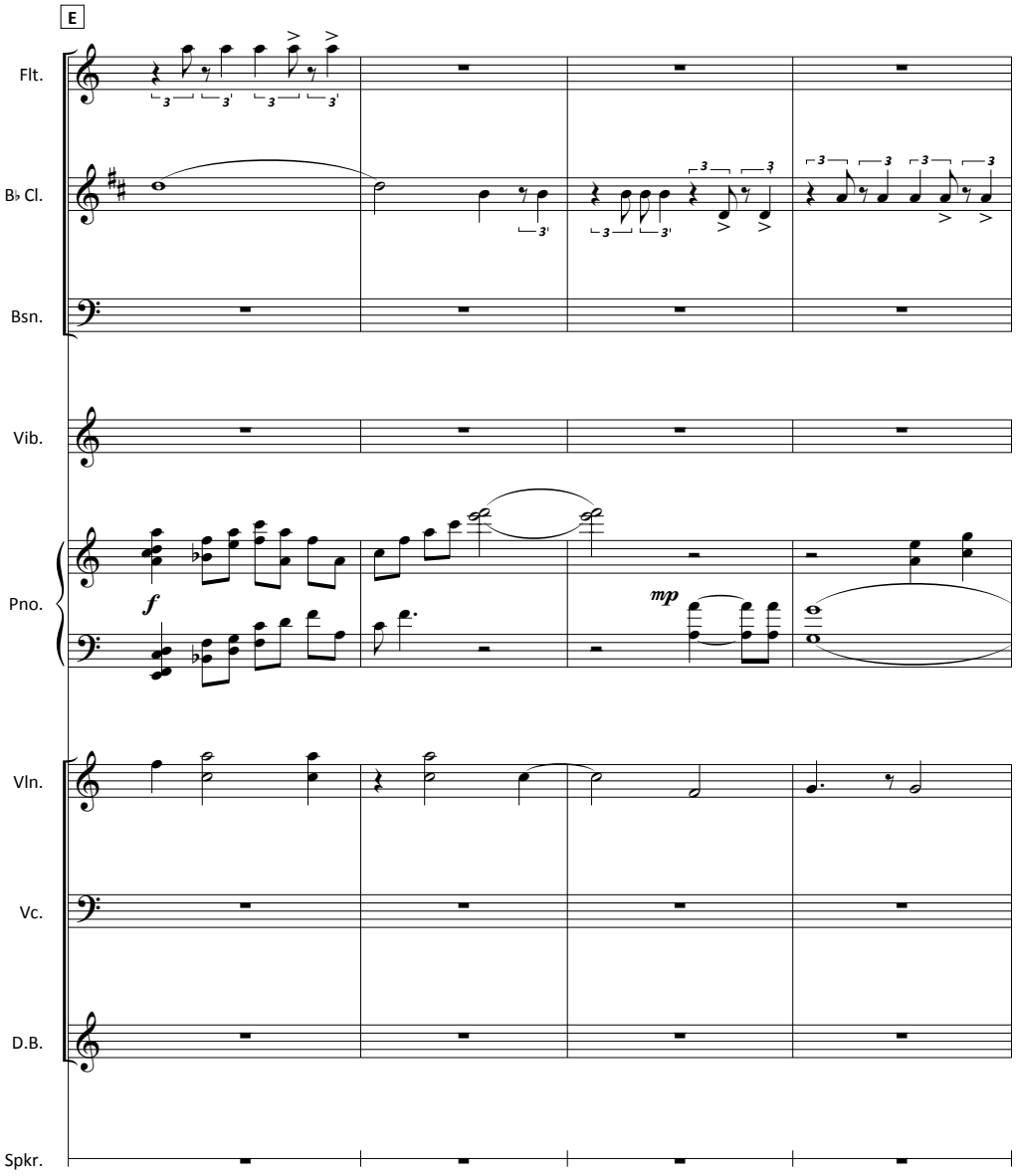
6. Finale

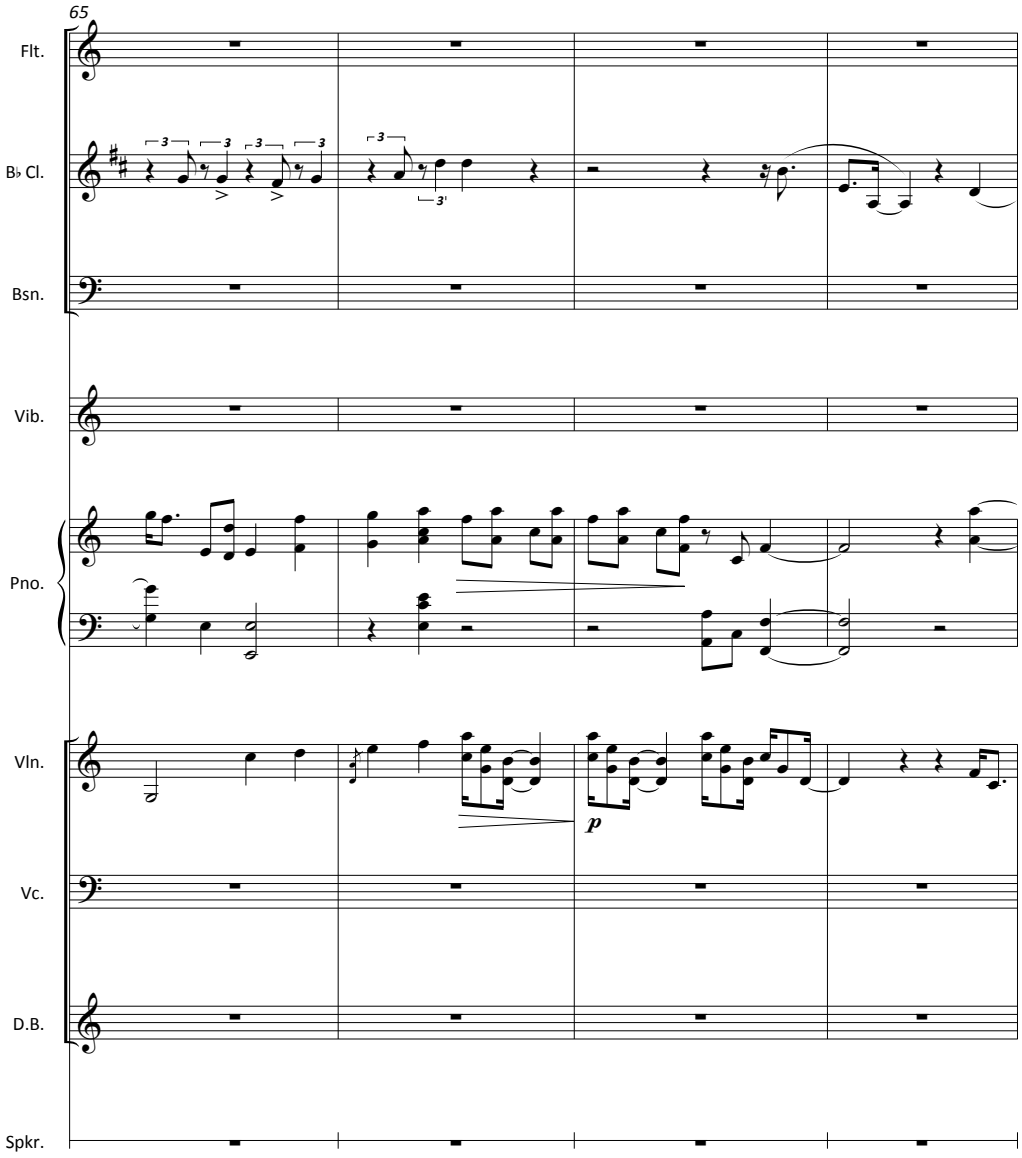


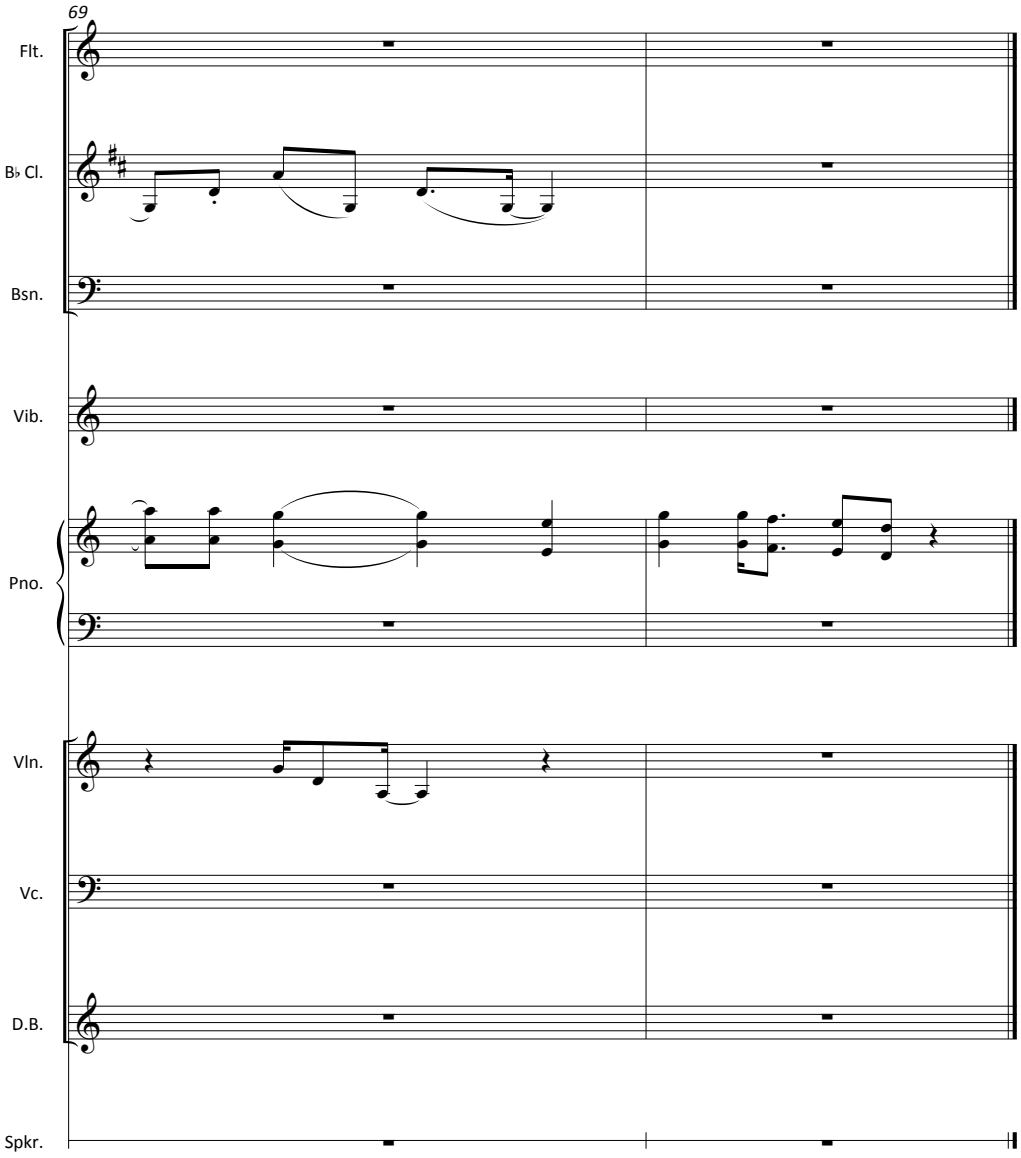
6. Finale




57
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.


E
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
f
mp
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.


65
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.
p


69
Flt.
B♭ Cl.
Bsn.
Vib.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
D.B.
Spkr.